

Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Cooperation & the Liberation of Desire

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Anarchy

A Journal of Desire Armed

From Politics to Life

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Anarcho-Communists, Platformism, & Dual Power

Lawrence Jarach

Rejecting the Reification of Revolt

Jason McQuinn

Reviews include:
Facing the Enemy,
The Organizational
Platform,
& The Clash of
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Cover collages by James Koehnline

Twilight of the Machines

John Zerzan



Against Organizationalism: Anarchism as both Theory and Critique of Organization



One of the most annoying and oft repeated clichés of leftist political rhetoric concerns the unquestioned imperative for nonspecific, generic “organization.” Whatever else might define the left, it has always and consistently called for the creation and development of formal organizations that are supposed to represent and lead the masses or the working class (or these days often the appropriate identity-group or “minority”). Of course, when leftists leave the realm of rhetoric and enter the realm of practice, it becomes quite evident why the details of organization are usually left unspecified. It’s easy to say that unorganized or disorganized people probably won’t have much success pursuing large, complex projects. But when the form of organization actually proposed calls for a “transmission-belt” structure with an explicit division between leaders and led, along with provisions to discipline rank and file members while shielding leaders from responsibility to those being led, more than a few people wise up to the con game and reject it. Even the addition of a little democracy these days isn’t enough to disguise the stench of power politics.

None of this is surprising to most anarchists, because the mainstream left has been explicitly hierarchical, authoritarian and statist since the time of the Jacobins and the French Revolution. However, even anarchists—or at least the more leftist of anarchists—have not been immune to organizational fetishism. From a genuine concern for helping to create the conditions for the have-nots to take back their world, the leftist organizational imperative is too often mistaken for a healthy underlying strategy which has unfortunately been undermined and discredited by unethical or power-hungry authoritarian leftists.

It’s true that the increasingly widespread disillusionment with formal organization amongst genuine radicals is often a direct result of two hundred years of counterproductive leftist practice. But leftist organizational practice isn’t just a good strategy corrupted by bad personnel. The same organization-building strategies with more radical theory and values grafted in place would continue to produce the same type of self-defeating practice precisely because the underlying problems are *structural* and not incidental. The cult of organizationalism—in which the construction and enlargement of formal, mass political and economic organizations take priority over the encouragement and generalization of anarchist self-organization—directly contradicts anarchist principles and goals. Organizationalism encourages and produces authoritarian, hierarchical, and alienating practices because it is based on the idea that people should be organized by politically-conscious militants rather than the anarchist idea that people must organize themselves for their own liberation.

Historically, the anarchist idea, anarchist theory and the international anarchist movement all originated in large degree in critical

response to the problems posed by radical organization. Yet, today, all too many left anarchists are taking on the job of rehabilitating a highly problematic organizationalist rhetoric and practice, relying only on superficial criticisms of the explicitly authoritarian, statist left to prevent—they hope—their own projects from duplicating the duplicity of the many leftist disasters that litter revolutionary history.



All anarchists differ from the political left in one central way: anarchists propose individual and communal *self*-activity, *self*-direction and *self*-organization as the only possible method for genuinely taking control of our lives. The political left, on the contrary, proposes organizing people as objects in order to gain the political power necessary to change institutional social conditions. The more radical of leftists will add that such change in institutional conditions can help bring about the possibility that the masses will eventually develop

enough self-awareness to directly govern themselves. But this is, of course, relegated to the indefinite future.

Given the ongoing disintegration of the international left, it has become ever more important for anarchists to rediscover and reconsider the foundations of the anarchist movement in the anarchist theory and critique of organization. As more leftists and ex-leftists drift into the anarchist milieu, it becomes increasingly important to remember that anarchism isn’t merely a form of leftism without an explicit goal of taking state power. The entire leftist political culture of representation, hierarchical organization, heteronomous discipline and the cult of leadership is contrary to the anarchist culture of autonomy, free association, self-organization, direct action and personal responsibility. The leftist practice of creating formal mass organizations in order to build political power involves entirely different assumptions and goals than the anarchist practice of encouraging generalized self-initiated, self-directed activity.

All the various forms of left anarchism involve attempted syntheses of aspects of left organizationalism with aspects of anarchist organization. And all of these attempted syntheses require some degree of sacrifice of anarchist theory, practice and values in exchange for an anticipated increase in ideological appeal or practical power. But anarchists will always sacrifice their own principles at great risk. There have been powerful left-anarchist syntheses that have made great practical contributions towards revolt, insurrection and revolution at times in the past: the heyday of anarcho-syndicalism around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century being one. But these have always come at the price of also diluting and confusing the anarchist side of the syntheses, which has ultimately led to their defeat.

In order to prevent further defeats, we can consciously base our practice on consistent principles of self-organization, always with as few compromises as possible, and with a clear eye on our goals.

Jason McQuinn, Editor

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Anti-capitalist anarchists march in Washington, D.C. on April 22. Photo by Hans Bennett.

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EDITOR
Jason McQuinn

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Mr. Fish, Sierra Madre, CA.
James Koehnline, Seattle, WA.
Mark Neville, Seattle, WA.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Manolo Gonzalez, San Francisco, CA.
Doug Imrie, Montréal, Quebec
Lawrence Jarach, Berkeley, CA.
Jonathan Slyk, Vancouver, BC
Alex Trotter, Brooklyn, NY.
Michael William, Montréal, Québec
John Zerzan, Eugene, OR.

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE
Anarchist Group of Cyprus • Nicole Babin • Jonathon Baker • Hans Bennett • Blaize • Bob Black • Federação Anarquista Gaúcha • F.W. Flores • Tuli Kupferberg • Wolfi Landstreicher • Libertarian Communist Group of Venezuela • Llabor d'anarquía • Jeff Shantz • Society against Scientistic Obscurantism & Industrial Terrorism

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C.A.L. Press
POB 1446
Columbia, MO 65205-1446
USA.

E-mail: jmcquinn@coin.org
Web Site: www.anarchymag.org

"The whirligig of time has its revenges."

—B.A.G. Fuller

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Editorial address for contributions, submissions and letters:

C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, U.S.A.

e-mail: jmcquinn@coin.org

AN OPTIMISTIC POLITICIAN AND
A PESSIMISTIC POLITICIAN ARGUING
ABOUT WHETHER THE WORLD IS HALF
FULL OR HALF EMPTY OF DESTITUTION.



Mr. fish



Massive London anti-war and Palestinian solidarity march in London on Sept. 29.

Inside Anarchy

As the terrorist war of the U.S. Empire on the rest of the world recklessly spreads to other targets also formerly in the pay of the CIA and U.S. military (first it was Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda & the Taliban, now Saddam Hussein's Iraq, tomorrow....) it's becoming harder and harder to understand the homicidal/suicidal logic of the G.W. Bush administration as much more than a fixation on obtaining the maximum oil & war industry profits for Bush cronies on the way to a self-immolating Armageddon. It looks like it will be more cheap oil for the U.S. military and consumers, higher profits for war profiteers like Cheney's Halliburton Company, and continuing orgasms of mass-death, misery and destruction rained down from the skies on the unlucky men, women and children of recalcitrant regimes. See James Koehnline's magnificent illustration on the back cover of this issue for the apparent ultimate aim of the moron-emperor's plans!

The bright spot is the increasing worldwide opposition to the plans of a president who may not know where a country is, what languages are spoken there or who its leaders are, but sure-as-heck knows that the U.S. military ought to bomb it back to the stone age if he doesn't like it all that much. With such a sick fuck-up for a president, the U.S. is soon likely to win the entire world's judgment that its empire is ultimately much more dangerous than the Nazis would have been, even if they had been first to dish out mega-destruction with atomic bombs. This is no rogue state; it's a *Rogue Empire*. Even elements of the increasingly fascist Israeli military are starting to worry that Bush will go too far! It's up to all of us around the world to resist the plans of all the thugs—both those within the U.S. Empire, as well as the lesser thugs still outside of its grasp.

As we go to press this issue of *Anarchy* is running nearly two months late, but the

quality of the contents should more than make up for its lateness. It features John Zerzan's new essay, "Twilight of the Machines"; Lawrence Jarach's cogent critique of sloppy anarcho-left theorizing, "Anarcho-Communists, Platformism, and Dual Power: Innovation or Travesty"; two post-left anarchist critiques—Wolfi Landstreicher's concise "From Politics to Life" and Jason McQuinn's "Rejecting the Reification of Revolt"; along with a new translation of the "Declaration of the Society against Scientific Obscurantism and Industrial Terrorism." And, as always, there's a whole lot more in this issue than just these features.

If you can get to San Francisco at the end of March, don't miss the annual Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair! As usual, *Anarchy* magazine editors Jason McQuinn and Lawrence Jarach will be on hand to man the C.A.L. Press table on March 29, 2003. We'll be there from 10AM until 6PM at the San

Continued on page 7

Contempt for anarchists: Contemporary hate campaigns in the anarchist milieu

When reading the contemporary anarchist press or surveying anarchist web sites and some of the more active anarchist e-mail lists, one can't help but notice the many, repeated pronouncements of contempt for many (often even most) anarchists—or for whole classes of anarchists—by others who also identify as anarchists. Those making the pronouncements of contempt generally adopt a holier-than-thou attitude of political-correctness reflecting their true belief in the one true correct line of their various ideologies. Any other anarchists who fail to uncritically believe in the same ideological lines with the same fervor are simply ridiculed and denounced. Most of the time no hint is given that the people denounced might have genuinely radical and intelligent reasons for thinking and acting as they do, or else that they might just be radicals with good intentions who are mistaken about the lessons of history or who don't understand the importance and usefulness of more thorough logic and self-critique.

Reading these pronouncements of contempt, one might wonder what has driven so many otherwise intelligent anarchists to extremes of denunciation which sometimes amount to hate campaigns. The answer seems to be that the anarchist milieu is undergoing big changes in response to the historic transformations in our social situation (consumer capitalism, post-industrial economic trends, the development of globalization & empire, and the collapse of the left). And as a result many of the various ideological minorities within the anarchist milieu see the current flux as both a threat to their erstwhile certainties, and at the same time as an opportunity to vie for hegemony of a milieu whose trajectory they no longer understand.

The paradigmatic example, of course, is the demagoguery of Murray Bookchin, whose attempts to split the anarchist milieu along lines conducive to his social ecology sect has set the tone for most of the current campaigns. Bookchin's highly emotional and incoherent rant *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*, published in 1995, marks the acceleration of the hate-campaign style of discourse to the point where it now appears to be taken for

granted by many anarchists that contempt for anarchist peers is a normal, practical attitude beyond any need for criticism. Bookchin's *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism* is remarkable for the range of his baseless denunciations, insults and name-calling ("fascist," "decadent," "mystical," "petit bourgeois," "infantile," "personalistic," "liberal," "yuppie,"

In these fratricidal attacks on other anarchists, there are rarely any coherent arguments against any fact, idea or principle expressed by those attacked. In most cases there are at best only vague or incoherent criticisms of facts, ideas or principles, which often don't even have anything to do with the people chosen for denunciation.

"lumpen," "bourgeois," "reactionary," etc.) and his near complete lack of concern for reconciling his personal hatreds with any intelligible reality. See the C.A.L. Press book *Anarchy after Leftism*, and the forthcoming *Withered Anarchism* for the sad details.

It would be one thing to apply terms like "bourgeois," "fascist" or "liberal" in principled fashion—by sincerely and factually employing their actual meanings to describe people who really do hold bourgeois, fascist or liberal positions. (And this should include honestly and intelligently explaining why one might think the positions deserve to be so described, especially if it is not readily apparent that they are so, and more especially if the people holding the positions adamantly claim that they are not so.) But in the vast majority of cases I've encountered lately there is either an utter lack of serious intent to apply such terms according to their actual meanings, or, in the worst cases, there is no intention to engage in anything but name-calling, denunciation and smearing of those targeted. In these fratricidal attacks on other anarchists, there are rarely any coherent arguments against any fact, idea or principle expressed by those attacked. In most cases there are at best only vague or incoherent criticisms of facts, ideas or principles, which often don't even

have anything to do with the people chosen for denunciation.

Sadly, there seem to be few brakes on this hate-campaign style of discourse and dismissal within the milieu. Although I read widely within the anarchist press, and occasionally take a quick look at anarchist web sites and e-mail lists, I rarely see anyone else criticize this general trend. (See also my editorial in *Anarchy* #51, "The Degradation of Anarchist Discourse.") At best, some anarchists denounce those they consider their personal anarchist enemies, and in passing complain about how those they denounce have no decency in their own respective denunciations—most often without being able to cite any genuine examples of their anarchist "enemy's" supposed foul play. (Unlike, for example, the case of Murray Bookchin cited above, where his bad faith is readily apparent (to anyone who reads his text) in his multitude of nonsensical name-calling, his self-contradictory denunciations—where the same people are called both "yuppie" and "lumpen" for example, and the sheer volume and repetition of his ineffective invective.)

But it's not too late to begin to change the level of discourse within the anarchist milieu. It won't be easy, given current trends, but it can be done. One of the hallmarks of anarchist theory and practice is our shared commitment to personal autonomy, the development of self-theory, and personal responsibility. It is incumbent upon each of us to employ this commitment to re-examine our motives, fears, logic and facts every time we open our mouths or unleash our pens (or computer keyboards)—before we speak or write, before we do more damage to the already fragile condition of the anarchist milieu. We each must ask ourselves if our comments, analyses and criticisms will help improve the overall situation, or only make it worse.

Words have shared historical and practical meanings; we can consciously choose to use these meanings to accurately portray our agreements and differences rather than as bludgeons to suppress mutual discussion, coherent critique and common understanding.

Your move, comrade.

Jason McQuinn, Editor

Rob "los Ricos" Thaxton The Life of a Comrade in Prison

Rob "los Ricos" Thaxton is a long term anarchist activist currently serving seven and a half years for throwing a rock at a cop on June 18, 1999. His current address is:

Rob Thaxton #12112716
OSP
2605 State St.
Salem, Oregon 97310

Rob Thaxton was born in Pampa, Texas on December 31, 1959. During his formative years he was greatly influenced by the mass media: TV and especially radio. Two events in his TV viewing experiences had profound effects on him: the Beatles appearance on the Ed Sullivan show and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The TV news was constantly bringing disturbing and inspiring images—riots, war, sports! He wasn't interested in sports so much, but things happened every now and then that made him take notice—the black sprinters who were stripped of their medals for raising their fists in solidarity with the Mexican students massacred prior to the Mexico City Olympics and Mohammed Ali going to jail instead of the army. "No Vietnamese ever called me nigger," he explained.

Drifting in and out of activism in his home town, Rob left for college hoping to dig up what was left of the revolutionary groups of the 1970s. His best friend and college roommate, Taron Moore, committed suicide the first week of classes, a loss that shook Rob up for years and led in part to his disillusionment with college and society in general.

Upon moving to Dallas, Rob at times became involved in activism and at times, became homeless. Eventually, these two conditions were co-existent. During one such instance, Rob landed a job at KNON community radio station and worked his way up to program director. KNON soon found itself wildly popular and enjoying unprecedented financial support. Rob's passion for music of all sorts enabled him to shake up the stale air that existed in the Dallas radio market.

During this time, Rob was also involved with CISPES and ACT-UP. The job didn't last and Rob found himself unemployed and adrift again.

So he moved to Austin at the age of 30. His activist lover in Dallas had introduced

him to anarchist history. So, after 15 years of political isolation, Rob wanted to be involved in an anarchist group and discovered one in Austin. There he also met some of the Earth First! anarchists.

Rob's work with the media, his years of experience and willingness to act when others waited, came into play when the Gulf War broke out in '90/91. Unwilling to take

Rob's work with the media, his years of experience and willingness to act when others waited, came into play when the Gulf War broke out in '90/91. Unwilling to take direction from the larger coalition against the war, the anarchists organized some of the more rowdy and effective demonstrations against Bush I's war for oil.

direction from the larger coalition against the war, the anarchists organized some of the more rowdy and effective demonstrations against Bush I's war for oil.

After the Kuwait campaign was over and the bombing of Iraq that goes on to this day continued, Rob continued his lists of firsts that he achieved in Austin.

- First protest against the G-8 summit in Houston ('90),
- First zine
- First anarchist conference.

Rob went on to travel and organize several anarchist gatherings and had writings published in *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*. However, fed up with the pointlessness of protest activism, Rob turned introspective and began to look for ways to put his ideas into practice. He met several people in Portland, Oregon who wanted to live according to their desires.

This was an unfocused time of drinking, drug use, working and loneliness. However, several wonderful things happened that changed his life. He became a father, decided not to kill himself either through drug use or working at life-stealing jobs and eventually came to respect himself enough to be true to his best qualities. This meant a rededication to creating change in society by transforming his own life.

Rob visited Columbia, Missouri to get more involved with C.A.L. Press and to

work more on his website, *Anarchy and Chaos*. He also decided to move onto a plot of land some friends had in the woods of Southern Oregon, just a day's jaunt from Portland and his daughter.

Just as everything was coming into place, Rob traveled to Eugene for an anarchist conference. Two days later, the infamous J18 carnival against the G-8 summit in Cologne, Germany occurred with Rob landing in prison for the longest sentence of anyone arrested that day in actions around the world.

Rob is scheduled for release October 29, 2006, just two months prior to his 47th birthday.

Inside Anarchy

Continued from page 5

Francisco County Fair building in Golden Gate Park next to the Arboretum.

The following day, BASTARD (Berkeley Anarchist Students of Theory And Research & Development) will be hosting the Third Annual Bay Area Anarchist Conference from 10AM-5PM on Sunday, March 30th, 2003 at New College of California, 766 Valencia Street in San Francisco. (For more information see the announcement on page 33 of this issue.) Be there!

Once again, if you're interested in *Anarchy* back issues, please note that we're sold out of issue #8 (including Bob Black's essay, "The Abolition or Work") and #9. Soon we'll also be running out of issues #10 through #16 as well, and then others. So, if you'd like to get them before they're gone for good, check out the back issue order form on page 82.

For a limited time, C.A.L. Press is still making a Special Postpaid Pre-Publication Offer for copies of the upcoming *Withered Anarchism* collection (now due out by the end of March). Send your check or money order for \$10 by March 31, 2003 and save \$4. Once the book is published the price will be \$11.95 (+ \$2.05 postage & handling). Plans now call for the following C.A.L. Press book to appear shortly afterward, probably with the title of *Post-Left Anarchy*. Several other books are also in the works, to be announced when they are closer to publication.

-Jason McQuinn, Editor

Lula wins; Brazil votes for capitalism!

By the Federação Anarquista Gaúcha (FAG)

After four months of many negotiations, conclaves and broken-down alliances, the Brazilian State finally and officially knows who its new president is. A foreseeable result and all official political policy makers were prepared for the victory of the coalition led by the PT (Workers' Party) with Lula at front. It took twelve years and four candidacies so that finally, in his last attempt, the ex-factory worker was elected. Every four years, his speech became more and more moderate, his program got milder and milder and the alliances forged went more and more to the right. The second round of votes on Sunday, 27th October, 2002, was the crowning of a definitive turn to the right of the PT, a party that arose from social movements and from authentic syndicalism at the end of '70s, that had an ample popular base and an original proposal of socialism and democracy.

To consolidate the final transformation of this party to the image of the middle-class social democratic program, an electoral and class alliance was braided ranging from still-authentic left-wing social movements (that campaigned very much against their will) up to symbolic presence as vice-president of a textile industry businessman with investments abroad, Jose Alencar....

disputes over serious themes and definitions, those who can alter the distribution of power of the national elite and of the transnational companies that are their allies. Within reformist prospects, it was possible, even in a conciliatory way, to seek to obtain more, to liberate the social forces to dispute the elections by putting to the public a program of basic reforms in Brazil. The same basic reforms, redistributing production and urban and rural lands, which toppled populist President Joao Goulart on April 1, 1964, when the military dictatorship took over Brazil. These same basic reforms marked the non-alignment of Brazil in the international economic order and would have led a Lula government, if it had been elected in 1989, to be knocked down by another coup d'état (by the congress or the military). These are minimal land and production reforms, independent development, the social function of land and access to city rights (urban reform) that no government will apply either in Brazil or in the Latin America. This is because here, in the backyard of the U.S.A., for us Latin-Americans, major structural reforms are more utopian than a social revolution, and are more distant from the reality of the struggle than a militant grassroots movement with its own program.

Some factors have to be studied in depth. This "will and desire of change," manipulated by the media and by official party policies, separates and temporarily removes any chance of change in the real world, in the

To consolidate the final transformation of this party to the image of the middle-class social democratic program, an electoral and class alliance was braided ranging from still-authentic left-wing social movements (that campaigned very much against their will) up to symbolic presence as vice-president of a textile industry businessman with investments abroad, Jose Alencar....

ing TV channel in Brazil, a subsidiary of the American CNN), apart from being a pearl of electoral terrorism, was a straightforward message of the national corporations and foreign capitals and interests acting in Brazil. The magazine openly declared that Lula and the hegemonic currents in the PT (that are the most moderated) will have to "secure" what they call the "free radicals," or in other words, the minorities of the PT in social movements which are already organizing their opposition to the Lula government and are even thinking of leaving the Party. In this way, neither Lula, nor the PT, nor its coalition nor its right-wing allies cause fear or alarm in the ruling class, in the political class and their leaders. There only remained one problem in the eyes of the elite: the danger of the PT and its government moving the organized social forces towards a program of conquests and benefits through the bourgeois state. The PT leadership knew this very well and in no moment of the campaign called the oppressed, workers, proletariat, women, students and blacks to combat! The call was another, it was aimed at everybody and at nobody, at the collective figures of capitalism who do not want to say anything. It treated everyone equally (at least in the world of law and literature) and called on "citizens, consumers, tax-payers and voters" to vote, to pay taxes, to carry out an electoral campaign with airs of patriotism, to carry colored flags and banners and to put stickers on their chests. The people no longer exist for the PT (this is because for the right they never existed, and were always an object of control and repression) as a mass and a class that is organized and struggles against the enemy, they can be relaxed and assured with the Lula triumph. What exists are just the citizens of a country that is found only on paper, that by chance is called Brazil and with the touch of a magic wand stops being the land of genocide and slavery—in the past and in the present, in the jails and in prisons, in the huts and shantytowns—and turns into "one of the greatest democracies on earth."

Neither the will to change nor the civic reformist campaign grasps our reality. The country has been in a recessive cycle for over four years. Unemployment is at its highest point in history. We are returning to a cycle of inflation; salaries have lost purchasing power over the eight years of the triumvirate in Brasilia that follows the commands of Washington and the IMF: Fernando Henrique (government), Pedro Malan (the economic arm) and General

Alberto Cardoso (the military leader).

In one of his first difficult and serious interviews, the almighty national president of social democracy (PT), the lawyer and Stalinist Jose Dirceu recognized all this reality and affirmed what they would and would not do. He said on Rede Cultura (a famous program of interviews on State TV) that his government will treat the National Congress as arena of debates and negotiations and that they will achieve what they can without breaking any international contract or commitment, giving first place to maintaining a financial surplus (that is, maintaining taxes), leaving barely any finances for the Executive, and attending to the interests of the alliances struck over the campaign (with businessmen, with the right-wing PFL, with sectors and oligarchies of the also right-wing PMDB, and with European capital). When asked about which measures would be taken against the social movements that wanted to make demands and fight against the federal government (even with this being a social democratic government), Jose Dirceu did not stammer and immediately proclaimed: "In these cases, we will apply the severity of the law!" In other words, comrades, once again they have proven that the anarchists are right. Once the bureaucracy has sat down on the throne, with power centralized in its hands, it represses and persecutes just like any right-wing party. Even here in the urban areas of Rio Grande do Sul, how many homeless squats are violently expelled by the Military Brigades? A recent example: on November 8th, 150 families were expelled from a squat in Porto Alegre with violence from the "security workers" (the PT now uses terms like these for repression).

However, if the popular movements are seduced with the offering of posts and departments, there they will always be treated well, they will always toss out a few baskets of food or any other donation to silence the mouths of the dissatisfied and that's the end of matter. That means, comrades, that our problem is much deeper, and that the lives of the oppressed do not change or improve with a "sensible man" occupying a part of bourgeois power (the presidency).

Dear comrades, an analysis like this could go on forever, because examples that show the contradiction between the social talk of justice and the actual practice of left-wing governments have filled thousands of pages. But this is not what concerns us now. We want to call on the authentic militant socialists, those who are in grassroot struggles (modest, humble but militant, like us), on class struggle fighters and on the people of Brazil, on left-wing organizations, popular movements and unions to mark a model and program of fighting and demands, no matter which government is in power.

2003 will be the year of ALCA trade negotiations and this is already our first banner!



G8 Summit protest in Kananaskis, Canada this past June.

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We should fight for the immediate moratorium of foreign debt, and for the suspension of internal debt! For taxes on companies, builders and real estate agencies (urbanizing shantytowns and creating policies for the homeless)! For a land reform based on struggle, occupying and taking over the lands of the owners of large estates! For the autonomy of decision and public funds for all public education (elementary, high school and university students)! For the expulsion of the U.S.A. from the Alcântara no Maranhao military base! Against Plan Colombia and in solidarity with Latin American revolutionary movements.

We will never gain our liberation following the rules of our enemies. For the oppressed

of Brazil, for the more than 100 million of black Brazilians, for all of the working class to free ourselves from the whip, from hunger, misery and violence will be by our own devices and nothing else. We believe that only the struggle of the people can liberate, and that only ourselves, political organizations and social movements of organized people can show the road to follow! It is urgent and necessary that we build a unity of struggle as people and as class. The popular struggle cannot be towed behind an elected bureaucracy. It matters little what we do when we are obliged to vote, what matters is our daily militancy in popular movements, in the cities, shantytowns, schools, factories, in the neighborhoods and in the street!

"So many Idiots"

An account of the failed Venezuelan coup of April 12, 2002

By the Libertarian Communist Group of Venezuela

The military coup in Venezuela on April 12, 2002 was an orchestrated conspiracy planned since 1999 against the leftist government of president Hugo Chávez Frías.

The conspirators plan had several stages, the last of which it was impossible to complete, that is murder of Chavez and the popular movements, of the voice of the people in our country and even in world-wide alternative media.

The military coup in Venezuela on April 12th unleashed a fascist fury against all the popular movements. In a few hours the alternative radios were subdued (for example, Radio Perla de Caricuao; TV Catia; and others); hundreds of revolutionary militants of all tendencies were stopped; people's houses invaded; left deputies stopped, along with ministers of Chávez; etc. But the fascist fury was especially implacable against all groups that smelled of the traditions of popular leftist self-management (alternative, cooperative networks, cultural centers, etc.).

The military coup in Venezuela on April 12th rescinded the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of 1999, which had been created by a Constituent Assembly and authenticated by the citizens on December 15th of that same year.

In the opinion of the coup participants, the reason for the military uprising had been the arms distributed by the government of Hugo Chávez Frías without justification, to repress and to assassinate innocent Venezuelans who peacefully protested on the 11th of April.

But already it was known that the snipers in the area of the rightist march were camouflaged Salvadoran fascists of the Luis Posada Carriles group, an anti-Castro Cuban terrorist also implicated in the bombing of a Cuban airliner en route from Barbados to Havana in 1977.

The snipers acted under the orders of Vice-Admiral Carlos Molina Tamayo, today sheltered in El Salvador. He was the military brain of the coup, a U.S. intelligence agent who was designated head of the armed forces by the de facto president installed by the coup, Pedro Carmona Estanga. Irrefutable texts of communications recorded during the right-wing march of the April 11th exist in which Molina Tamayo gave orders to the snipers. And these informed on him.

The day of the right-wing march of the April 11, 2002 a popular assembly for defense of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic was organized in the environs of

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the palace of Miraflores. There the Metropolitan Police, under the control of the mayor of Caracas, Alfredo Peña, and his head of security Iván Simonovis, opened fire, killing many people at the Llaguno Bridge. Armed citizens responded to the attack by the Metropolitan Police, but did not injure anyone, because the Police were firing from armored vehicles with names like "The Whale" and "The Rhinoceros." Nevertheless, the right-wing mass media used the video of Llaguno Bridge as though it was proof that the Bolivarianos circles had attacked the right-wing demonstrators.

In 1999 Alfredo Peña joined the government of Chávez with the intention of defending the interests of which he is spokesman. Most important of them, he is the one of the Knoll family, proprietor of the newspaper *El Nacional*, with old progressive connections, but now having moved towards right-wing positions similar to those of the newspaper *El País* of Spain. Peña became mayor of Caracas thanks to Chavista votes. His aspiration was to be a presidential candidate endorsed by *El Nacional*. But Chávez returned to power on the 14th, so soon after the coup failed that Peña was forced to accept the resignation of Iván Simonovis, who was

accused by the entire left of this country of ordering the Metropolitan Police to shoot those assembled at the Llaguno Bridge. Two or three weeks later the Metropolitan Policeman who directed "La Ballena" appeared in strange circumstances to have been forced into suicide on the seats of that police vehicle.

The explanation for the coup according to which Carmona Estanga was just an industrialist who was going to call for elections, that the coup-leaders agreed to "sacrifice themselves for their country" by requesting participation in the coup by the commander-in-chief of the army, General Efraín Vásquez Velasco, does not stand up to any analysis. In effect, the coup participants were of diverse tendencies, combined in a common objective to overthrow the democratically elected president. But Carmona incarnated in this game of ruffians not only the business cartel but the transnational oil sectors which promote the idea of Venezuela privatizing its oil industry. Carmona is one of the owners of the private oil company Venoco, that includes a partner, Isaac Pérez Recao, who is also an arms dealer who invested an appreciable sum of resources into the coup attempt. Pérez Recao supplies arms to the United Self-Defense of Colombia, which is to say, to the Colombian paramilitaries, and is an "intimate friend" of Carlos Castaño, head of the *paramos*.

The conspirators' plan counted on the following components: the Venezuelan business cartel (incarnated in Carmona); the executive committee of the Confederation of Workers of Venezuela (CTV) represented by the union gangster Carlos Ortega and present vice-president of the Central International of Free Union Organizations (CIOSL), bastion of union social democracy; Luis Miquilena and his associates, who had hardly been minister of the interior and justice of Chávez for three months, but had gotten upset with him because he had not been given the vice-presidency; the Cisneros family with its Venevisión channel; the Ravel family, with its Globovisión channel; the technocratic petroleum mafia of Venezuela (Pedevesa); the non-governmental organizations (ONG's) of the right-wing middle and upper classes; political parties of the right; the Opus Dei and the Venezuelan Catholic Church; and the satellite sectors that were added from business strike of December 10, 2001.

What happened in the coup of April 12th? All the protagonists were reunited, in the

offices of Venevisión, when general Efraín Vázquez Velasco, commander-in-chief of the army, appeared on television, appealing to President Chávez and saying that until that moment he had been loyal. But that he demanded his resignation to him then and there. Immediately, Carmona Estanga left his fellow conspirators at Venevisión and told them that he was going to rest at a luxury hotel, get a bath and a change of clothes.

One hour had not passed when Carmona appeared on television screens saying that he had been called to Fort Tiuna by the military leaders with the intention of analyzing the situation in the country and making decisions. Immediately, the other conspirators at the offices of Venevisión reacted, complaining that "that wasn't the deal," that they had been "betrayed." Carlos Ortega called Pedro Carmona Estanga by cell phone and complained: "I believed you in the hotel, your word can't be trusted, you're not an honest man, that wasn't the agreement." Carmona responded: "Don't say that, Carlos, the vice-presidency of the Republic will be held for the CTV, I promise you." Ortega then addressed the others in the Venevisión offices and said: "Now I know what happened, Carmona it is acting by his own account, leaving us like the *guayabera* (a South American fruit), but he promised the vice-presidency to me." To that some others responded: "He doesn't fit this situation, it's going fail because Chavismo is strong, and we need someone with ties to Chavismo in the presidency. We've been saying Don Luis (Miquilena) was the man for this transition—with this jerk Carmona we are going to end up with Chávez for a long time."

Friday, April 12th at eleven in the morning Carmona wanted to take his oath, but nobody was there to accept it. It was scheduled for the following day with the swearing-in of the executive cabinet. But throughout the day a popular mobilization began from the early hours, within the framework of a repression that was unravelling. The Venezuelan anarchists participated in those mobilizations that fundamentally demanded respect for the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of 1999, created by a Constituent Assembly chosen by the Venezuelan towns.

Saturday, April 13th all the "active forces" of the country were concentrated in Miraflores (the presidential palace) to attend the swearing-in of the new executive cabinet. But then a crowd of thousands of people surrounded the palace, and other thousands came marching from different points from proletarian Caracas. And from inside, the soldiers of the armed forces began to mobilize, to urge the demonstrators to shout Chavista slogans, forming an assembly of soldiers that did not recognize Molina Tamayo and decided to stop him. But Molina



Recent food and job riot arrests in Argentina.

managed to flee by a side door with representatives from the "active forces" of the coup who were so frightened that they went to their vehicles looking for bodyguards. Hours after noon on Saturday the 13th all the country was rising. The commercial television channels stopped transmitting anything but North American films, the government channel had been closed the previous day, the Education Minister and leader of the Patria Para Todos party (PPT), Aristóbulo Istúriz, was the first Chavista boss to enter Miraflores. Shooting was heard inside. Radio Bemba, the communications service of the counter coup, announced by mobile broadcast that Istúriz had been "broken." Incredibly, people crowded themselves against the fences of the presidential palace, trying to demolish them in order to enter because "If they killed [Istúriz] we are going to kill them all, *coños de madre*." But immediately a colonel of the armed forces unexpectedly mounted a platform and announced: "Everyone quiet, Istúriz is alive, seated in Chávez's chair, and soon the president will return and everything will return to normal." Then, people calmed down, began to sing, and heard improvised drums. The Caracas workers had prepared in advance to celebrate their Night of San Juan—the celebration of the lower classes.

Carmona Estanga, who also managed to flee from Miraflores on Saturday the 13th, arrived at Fort Tiuna, seat of the armed forces in Caracas, to meet specially with the rebellious generals and with general Efraín Vázquez Velasco, commander of the army. But the general indicated to him that "he had committed errors," that "it is necessary to renounce them," but not without first staging a

farce on television requesting respect for "human rights," the "social conquests of the people," and the "Constitution." He added that Chávez wanted to leave the country, and that the army guaranteed his life. But this was a lie. General Vázquez Velasco simply did not control the Fort Tiuna, nor did the organizers of the military coup. Vázquez thought that Carmona would name him minister of Defense, but this didn't happen. Instead, he named a vice-admiral who had been aide-de-camp of Carlos Andrés Pérez.

In the command headquarters of the army, where twenty-four hours before, they had toasted the fall of Chávez, there was an inexplicable troop movement. Soldiers fanned out through the building and arrived at the fifth floor where the generals were. A soldier pointed at the chest of General Vázquez Velasco and said to him: "General, you are under arrest. Where is the president? The assembly of soldiers and the officials of Fort Tiuna are in control of the situation." General Vázquez Velasco was scared, fearing for his life, like the other generals. "Don't shoot, we won't shoot, we surrender," they almost shouted in a chorus. When stopping Carmona Estanga, a sergeant of the army confessed that the industrialist said to him: "Don't kill me; I'm confused. I don't know what has happened."

Weeks later, before the National Assembly, General Vázquez Velasco, already ex-Commandant General of the Army, confessed "We fell into a trap, this was a trap." Forgetting that for his defense nobody can allege his own stupidity. But there are generals who are idiots. Just as there are other useful idiots who always serve to the interests of the transnational right.

Facing the Enemy

A platformist interpretation of the history of anarchist organization

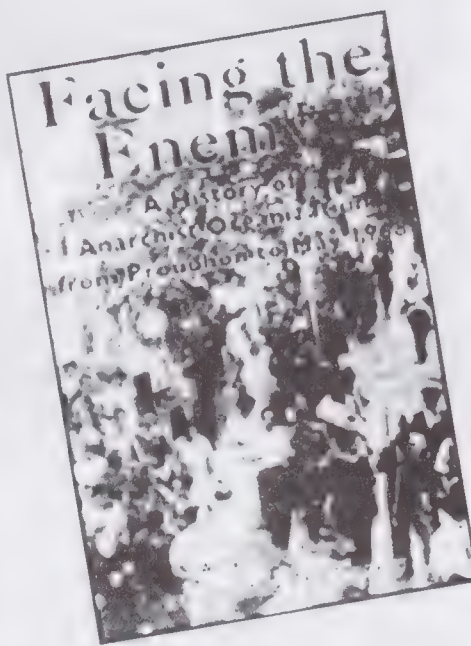
Review by Jason McQuinn

Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968 by Alexandre Skirda, translated by Paul Sharkey (AK Press, POB 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682, USA; AK Press, POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland; & Kate Sharpley Library, BM Hurricane, London, WC1 3XX, England; 2002) 292 pp., \$17.95 paper.

Any history of anarchist currents and movements must also be a history of their organization. Radical ideas and practices are nothing if not aspects of a social engagement whose own content and structure both anticipate the new society that is desired. In fact, the theory and critique of organization has consistently been one of the most central and contested concerns of anarchists since Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin, Faure, Malatesta, Kropotkin and many, many others gave world-historical shape to the anarchist movement in the 19th Century.

It thus remains extremely important to this day for all anarchists to fully understand not only the major anarchist theories and critiques of organization, but also the history of the actual forms of organization used by anarchists around the world in well over a century of often highly-effective practice. Unfortunately, Alexandre Skirda in *Facing the Enemy* isn't going to be the person to write this history, despite Paul Sharkey's misleading English translation of the subtitle of the book as *A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*. (The original French title and subtitle actually translate more literally as "Individual Autonomy and Collective Force: Anarchists and Organization from Proudhon to our time.")

What Skirda is equipped to do is something much narrower, that is to write a polemical platformist interpretation of the history of anarchist organization. *Facing the Enemy* is certainly not without value in providing a revealing look into the machinations of Marx in the First International, the various incarnations of Bakunin's secret societies, the effects of police interventions, and the manipulative mindsets and practices of those adopting platformist ideology, primarily in France. However, as a history of anarchist organization in general the book is often biased, intentionally incom-



plete, and occasionally illogical—quite clearly reflecting the limitations of the platformist ideology it preaches.

Every anarchist (and every would-be revolutionary) should take some time to study the history of the First International. However, given the apparent decline of interest within the anarchist milieu in unearthing its own history (paralleling a decline in interest in history within the larger media-saturated, spectator/internet society), even reading a short account like Skirda's would improve on most anarchists' knowledge of the situation. Of particular interest here is the period following the demise Marx's rump First International after he safely deposited it's General Council with stooges in New York—a period of anarchist agitation too-often ignored in most of the full-scale accounts of the Marx/Bakunin, centralist/federalist conflict in the International.

Skirda's quick review of a few of Bakunin's various organizational schemes and programs for his Alliances and International Brotherhoods is another worthwhile contribution to anarchist history, especially since most biographical and historical studies of Bakunin and those he influenced were done before important source materials were excavated in recent decades. However, Bakunin's penchant for invisible, "collective

dictatorship" (p. 15), always unsettling to anti-authoritarians who study his ideas, is played down a bit too unconvincingly here. Secret societies of revolutionaries make much more sense when anarchists operate in countries where all radical speech is suppressed (as Bakunin most often did). But the invisible "dictatorship" of anarchist revolutionaries from within the masses is a formulation just as much given to authoritarian tensions as the more well-known and oft-criticized Marxist formulation of "the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Another valuable aspect of Skirda's account of anarchist history is his periodic focus on the effects of police surveillance, infiltration and provocation. This has huge implications for contemporary anarchists. There are the obvious dangers for autonomous, small-group activities (primarily the odd provocateur urging worthless or suicidal acts of violence, since widespread infiltration and surveillance are more difficult in such groups). While there are also many dangers for larger sectarian groupings or the various types of federation (more obviously revealed in accounts of the COINTELPRO destabilization of the '60s & '70s New Left in the US, particularly aimed at the Black Panthers and AIM), in which surveillance and infiltration are much easier, as are attempts to incite internecine strife.

However, like most platformists (and like authoritarians in general), Skirda considers many important historical anarchist ideas and criticisms of organization to be impractical or inefficient because under free self-organization there is nothing to compel anarchists to fall into line as a disciplined mass of followers under a unitary ideology at the call of their leadership. Like too many organizationalists he prefers to condemn any anarchists who balk at attempts to discipline and control them, ridiculing their refusals to subordinate their own judgments for those of more-or-less democratic processes or less-than-transparent organizational directives. This is where sneering efforts at manipulation of the reader enter his narrative more and more frequently, as in chapter VIII: "Anti-organizationists and bombers." Skirda is as well aware as anyone else that political bombings have been by far more often the work of organizations than of isolated, demoralized individuals, and that even

within the anarchist milieu around the end of the 19th century attentats weren't predominantly the work of anarchist individuals, much less the semi-mythical "anti-organizationists."

Relying on a piece of testimony at a trial as his only flimsy evidence, Skirda concludes that all the anarchist groups in 1880s Paris were really non-existent except as "temporary get-togethers," with "no connection and no coordination involved" even between groups in federation. If a formal platform, membership cards or dues, and a secretariat didn't exist, then, for the organizational fetishists, obviously there was no organization involved! Similarly, for the authoritarian left, without formal offices of leadership and means of controlling members, only chaos can ensue. Both views oppose the full range of anarchist self-organization, which can be formal or informal, depending upon its purposes and the situations in faces.

Neither is Skirda very clear in his analysis of the various illegalist, insurrectionary, "propaganda of the deed" tendencies which came to prominence in the anarchist milieu of the 1870s and 1880s, at times mixing the various ideas, and portraying them as a single phenomenon centering on the coincidental movement-wide infatuation with dynamite and attentats. In its most general meaning, of course, "propaganda by deed" signifies, as Malatesta said, the "act of insurrection, designed to assert socialist principles by deeds" (p. 39), or in more contemporary terms, the potentially exemplary nature of direct action. And anarchist illegalism at its most basic refuses to acknowledge capitalist laws as in any way valid limits to anarchist activity. While insurrectionary anarchism advocates support for the immediate break with all hierarchical, capitalist institutions and social relations whenever and wherever possible.

Clearly, the most effective anarchist propaganda will always be the actual, direct implementation of anarchist social relationships, and in this sense "propaganda by deed" has always been a core practice of most anarchists, despite the ill repute gained by the term itself after it became much more narrowly associated with bombings and attentats in the popular mind. And the most effective anarchists have always refused to be limited by the laws imposed by state and capital to maintain our slavery, though the term "illegalism" has also fallen into ill repute after being associated with a few particular French anarchists whose law-breaking tended to stretch the credulity of their commitments to anarchism. While every form of social revolutionary anarchism has always advocated insurrectionary prac-

tice, since without a complete break with capitalist social institutions revolution is clearly impossible—though the question of appropriate timing for insurrectionary acts remains widely contested.

To criticize any of these three aspects of anarchist practice should always call for

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careful distinctions to be made in what is being criticized. Ignorant claims that "propaganda by deed" necessarily requires bombings or tyrannicide ignore the fruitful history of anarchist direct action (as well as the fact that some bombings and tyrannicides have at times been appropriate and effective). While condemnations of illegalism often ignore the fact that every genuine revolt necessarily involves the repudiation of all illegitimate, capitalist laws. And categorical repudiations of insurrectionary practice always in imply the defense of the institutions of capital and state, which will never wither away without our active participation in their demise.

Just as importantly, no one should lose sight of the that the relatively brief anarchist craze for dynamite and fulminates of mercury, along with assassinations by dagger or pistol, in the decades immediately before and after the turn of the 19th to the 20th century has little to do with the more general validity of extra-legal direct action and insurrectionary or revolutionary violence. While individual and small-group attentats have sometimes been the work of despairing solidarity (like Alexander Berkman's attempted assassination of the industrialist mass-murderer Frick), they have often been tactically and strategically effective (like the activities of some of the anarchist *pistoleros* in Spain).

Which brings up the strangest aspect of Skirda's platformist interpretation of

anarchist organizational history. The FAI (the Iberian Anarchist Federation) is almost absent from his analysis, despite the fact that this notorious federation may be the one example of an anarchist organization that is admired by social revolutionary anarchists of all tendencies—at least so far as I'm aware. I'm sure the fact that the FAI's practice in the decade leading up to the Spanish Revolution was contrary to platformist dogmas has a part to play in Skirda's avoidance of the subject, but no platformist interpretation of history will ever convince anyone by ignoring the most historically important example of a large anarchist federation. However, rather than discussing the actual organizational structure and dynamics of the FAI, Skirda is content to complain that the FAI ought to have followed the *Platform* instead of ignoring it. And after this he gives a confusing account of the CNT refusal of social revolution and policy of collaboration with political authorities. And this without indicating the faintest understanding that the only genuine revolutionary question posed in 1936 was whether the people in arms would organize their own social revolution (which they attempted throughout much of the countryside) or submit to authorities, whether those authorities were constituted in Madrid, the Catalan Generalitat, or the CNT and UGT (as they largely did in Barcelona and other cities).

The usefulness of Skirda's history plummets with his account of the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. Suddenly the poor, misunderstood *Organizational Platform* is portrayed as the be-all and end-all of anarchism. The general opposition within the international anarchist movement to the more unsavory aspects of the *Platform* must be explained away, distorted, undermined with personal innuendo and accusations of petty plots. And a minority organizational practice which has never accomplished much of lasting value within the international anarchist movement becomes the complete center of attention for Skirda, as though the vast majority of non-platformist and anti-platformist anarchists count for little or nothing. In fact, Skirda often demeans the vast majority of anarchists, their ideas and practices as chaotic individualist nut-cases of one sort or another. This despite the fact that platformists, for all their delusory bombast about organizing "all of the wholesome elements of the anarchist movement into one umbrella organization" (p. 211), have almost always attracted only a small minority of anarchists to follow their sectarian tenets, often only those least com-

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Wooden Shoes or Platform Shoes?

On the Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists

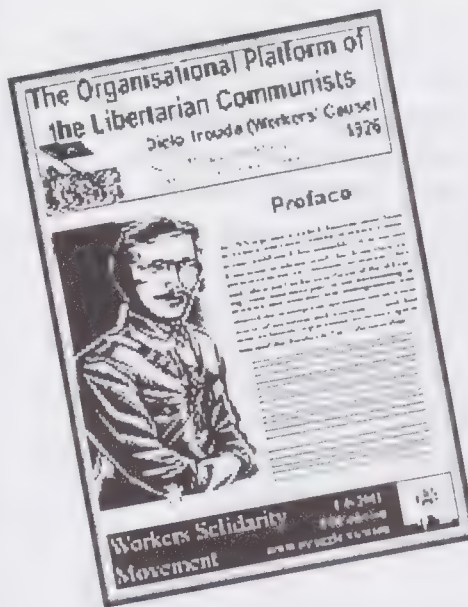
Review by Bob Black

Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists by Nestor Makhno, Ida Mett, Pyotr Arshinov, Valevsky & Linsky. (Workers' Solidarity Movement, POB 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland, 1989; Also available from the web site: <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/wsm/>) 12 pp. pamphlet.

It attests to the ideological bankruptcy of the organizational anarchists today that they should exhume (not resurrect) a manifesto which was already obsolete when promulgated in 1926. The *Organizational Platform* enjoys an imperishable permanence: untimely then, untimely now, untimely forever. Intended to persuade, it elicited attacks from almost every prominent anarchist of its time. Intended to organize, it provoked splits. Intended to restate the anarchist alternative to Marxism, it restated the Leninist alternative to anarchism. Intended to make history, it barely made it into the history books. Why read it today?

Precisely because, poor as it is, it has never been surpassed as a programmatic statement of organizational, workerist anarchism. Not that latter-day workies deserve to be saddled with archaism like the Platformist policy toward the peasantry, to which many words are devoted. But much of the rhetoric is familiar—so much so that the formulations in circulation apparently cannot be improved upon. The Platform may have had great influence on those who have not had great influence.

In language redolent of recent rantings against “lifestyle anarchism”—right down to the disparaging quotation marks—the Platform attributes the “chronic general disorganization” of anarchists to “the lovers of assertion of ‘self,’ [who,] solely with a view to personal pleasure, obstinately cling to the chaotic state of the anarchist movement.” The absence of organizational principles and practices is the “most important” reason why anarchism is weak. Most deplorable is the claim of a right “to manifest one’s ‘ego,’ without obligation to account for duties as regards the organization.” It is remarkable that, in 1926, these anarchists did not consider more important than any internal cause of weakness the kind of state repression they had all experienced, or the influence of the Communists who had defeated and exiled them, or even tenden-



cies in capitalist development which eroded anarchism's social bases. The Platform is a triumph of ideology over experience.

No document of this type is complete—the Communist Manifesto is another specimen—unless it opens with some sweeping, categorical falsifications of history. Everybody knows it is not true that “all human history represents an uninterrupted chain of struggles waged by the working masses for their rights, liberty, and a better life.” During long stretches the “working masses” have been quiescent. At other times—including ours, in many places—the struggles have been confined to small numbers of militants. “In the history of human society this class struggle has always been the primary factor which determined the form and structure of these societies.” Maybe long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away.... Space does not permit listing all the societies of which this is not even colorably true (such as colonial America, or ancient Greece, or Anglo-Saxon England, or Tokugawa Japan, or...).

What's the point of these historical howlers, these proletarian pieties? To give the reader the feeling that if he should mix it up with class society, he is part of the primary determinant of history, even if, as usually happens, his efforts determine nothing.

Next, Makhno & Co. discuss how “the principle of enslavement and exploitation of the masses by violence constitutes the basis of modern society.” (only modern society?); they iterate many forms of institutional and ideological domination. So far, so good. The conclusion: “Analysis of modern society [‘description’ is more like it] leads to the conclusion that the only way to transform capitalist society into a society of free workers is the way of violent social revolution.” Huh? There's a middle term missing, perhaps something like “if capitalist society is very strong, resistance is futile, you will be assimilated,” or “if capitalist society is very strong, the only way to overthrow it is not to resist it on its own violent terrain.” Each is as dogmatic and unverifiable as the others.

Class struggle gave birth to the idea of anarchism, which came not—the comrades are very insistent—“from the abstract reflections of an intellectual or a philosopher.” This is of course untrue. Modern anarchism as something with a continuing history is the idea of Proudhon, who was as much an intellectual as he was a worker, and who was not engaged in class struggle or even thinking about it in 1840. “The outstanding anarchist thinkers, Bakunin, Kropotkin and others,” discovered the idea of anarchism in the masses—an extraordinary feat of clairvoyance, since the masses had no idea the idea was theirs. If Bakunin got the idea of anarchism from the struggling masses, it took him long enough. Kropotkin got the idea from the Swiss workers in the Jura Federation, who got their anarchism from Bakunin. As he writes in his *Memoirs*, the egalitarianism—he doesn't mention class struggle—more than anything else, won him over to anarchism.

A platform, like a catechism, cannot accommodate complexity, plurality or uncertainty. An idea must have a single origin and a single outcome. If the masses originate an idea then no individual does. If anarchism cannot be reduced to humanitarianism, then it is not a product of humanitarianism at all, and never mind if there have been real individuals (William Godwin, for instance) who arrived at anarchism by carrying their version of humanitarianism

(in Godwin's case, utilitarianism) to its logical conclusion.

After some acceptable if simplistic strictures upon democracy, the social democrats, and the Bolsheviks, the Platformists aver that, contrary to the Bolsheviks, "the labouring masses have inherent creative and constructive possibilities which are enormous." But rather than let nature take its course, before the revolution the General Union of Anarchists (not to be confused with the Union of Egoists) are to prepare the masses for social revolution through "libertarian education"—but that is not sufficient. After all, if it were sufficient, there would be no need for the General Union of Anarchists.

The GUA is to organize the worker and peasant class "on the basis of production and consumption, penetrated by revolutionary anarchist positions." This choice of words is either revealing or unfortunate. Organized "consumption" means cooperatives, but what organization around production means is surprisingly unclear for a workerist platform. The comrades are anti-sindicalist, although, with obvious insincerity, they profess to be agnostic about choosing between factory committees or workers' soviets (their preference) and revolutionary trade-unions to organize production.

However, syndicalist unions are to be used as a means, "as one of the forms of the revolutionary workers movement." Anarchists from GUA are supposed to turn the unions in a libertarian direction, something which even revolutionary syndicalists, having no "determining theory," and dealing with ideologically diverse union members, cannot be counted on to accomplish. But isn't that just more "libertarian education"? This much is clear, anarchists "must enter into revolutionary trade unions as an organized force, responsible to accomplish work in the union before [?] the general anarchist organization and orientated by the latter." In other words, take over the organizations of others for your purposes, not theirs. Of course, it's for their own good. This part of the Platform is not much use to contemporary organizers, since the revolutionary unions they are supposed to infiltrate nowhere exist, and even they must know better than to try to start some, since they never do.

Current interest in the Platform presumably focuses on the climactic "Organizational Section." Having denounced at some length "all the minimum programmes of the socialist political parties," in this section the authors state that their scheme "appears to be the minimum to which it is necessary and urgent to rally all the militants of the orga-

nized anarchist movement"! Repeatedly the Platform requires that all the militants work toward creation of the General Union of Anarchists and undertake no revolutionary action not authorized by the organization. "The practice of acting on one's personal responsibility should be decisively condemn-

Current interest in the Platform presumably focuses on the climactic "Organizational Section."...Repeatedly the Platform requires that all the militants work toward creation of the General Union of Anarchists and undertake no revolutionary action not authorized by the organization. "The practice of acting on one's personal responsibility should be decisively condemned and rejected" because revolution "is profoundly collective by nature."

ed and rejected" because revolution "is profoundly collective by nature." Maybe in the endgame, but there has never been a revolution which was not prepared by various activities of individuals and groups (usually small). And, unless you count the Bolshevik coup d'etat, there has never been a revolution ordered and carried out by a vanguard organization. The Platform is unfathomable as an anarchist program except as a reaction to the anarchist defeat in Russia. The losers, brooding in exile (and in Makhno's case, in his cups), fetishize unity precisely because it is always unattainable in their circumstances. Their hatred adulterated with envy, they long to turn the tables on the winners. They have to believe that they could have won—and maybe they could have, as their critic Voline believed—otherwise their sacrifices were meaningless. Significantly, their very first sentence invokes, in the religious sense of the word, "the heroism and innumerable sacrifices borne by the anarchists in the struggle for libertarian communism."

"Theory represents the force which directs the activity of persons and organizations along a defined path towards a determined goal. Naturally it should be common to all the persons and organizations adhering to the General Union." Naturally. The

criticism of weapons having failed them, the Platformists take up the weapons of criticism. The organization dictates the ends and the means to "all the militants." But theory is not to guide activity directly, as in the current "chaotic state of the anarchist movement." Theoretician-leaders translate theory into commands. Am I exaggerating? The Union "requires each member to undertake fixed organization duties, and demands execution of communal decisions." The Union prescribes common "tactical methods" for all. By rendering themselves uniform and predictable, the revolutionaries confer an immense advantage on their enemies. Taking "a firm line against irresponsible individualism," the Union forfeits the benefits of responsible individualism.

The division between leaders and led is not confined to the "executive committee" at the top of the hierarchy (which the Platform calls "federalism"). "Every organization adhering to the Union represents a vital cell of the common organism. Every cell should have its secretariat, executing and guiding theoretically the political and technical work of the organization." I am reminded of nothing so much as the famous frontispiece to Hobbes' *Leviathan*, depicting a giant with the head of a king and a body consisting of swarms of little people. At exactly this point in history, the Fascists were expressing similar ideas in similar organismic metaphors. Notice that the secretariat both proposes and disposes. In its capacity as theoretical guide, it takes the initiative in transmitting and interpreting Union directives, and in its capacity as executive, it orders and supervises their implementation. The rank and file militants are only conduits.

The Workers' Solidarity Movement edition, without so indicating, omits several interesting passages from the *Platform* which are quoted in "Concerning the Platform for an Organization of Anarchists," a rebuttal by Voline and other Russian anarchists. For example, "We believe that decisions of the soviets will be carried out in society without decrees of coercion. But such decisions must be obligatory for everyone who has accepted them [how? how long?], and sanctions must be applied against those who reject them." This is the state. Also, "there can be specific moments when the press, however well intentioned, will be controlled to an extent for the good of the revolution." The critics ask: controlled by whom? They voice other objections, including objections to the defense of the revolution by a centralized regular army. Ten years later, the issue was posed in Spain between the revo-

Continued on page 19

The Clash of Civilizations

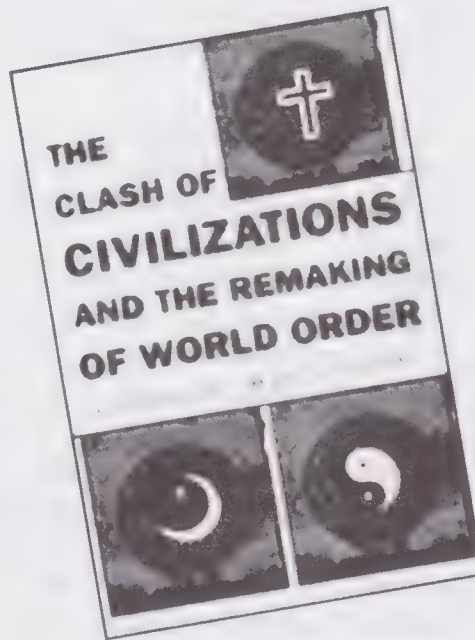
Review by Alex Trotter

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order by Samuel P. Huntington (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996) 368 pp. \$15.00 paper.

Samuel P. Huntington is a member of the U.S. think-tank intelligentsia on tap to the national security state, with a long history of service to Democratic Party administrations. This book, which began as an article in a 1993 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, set forth a weltanschauung that has become influential among the Metternichs of the contemporary American imperium. Indeed, *The Clash of Civilizations* received enthusiastic puffs from Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, the higher brains of realpolitik. Another familiar figure among corporate-state intellectuals in the years following the end of the cold war has been Francis Fukuyama, whose proposition was that, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire, nothing would stop the worldwide triumph of liberal capitalist democracy in the "end of history." But then came the horrendous ethnic wars in the former USSR, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and other places. The ongoing deterioration of this tired world now threatened by economic collapse; further murderous conflicts fought with doomsday weapons; and the ruinous effects of the accelerating domination of nature makes it clear that history ain't over till it's over. In officialdom, Fukuyama's complacent outlook seems to have been overtaken by Huntington's considerably more pessimistic one.

The Clash of Civilizations has been abundantly reviewed already in the years since its appearance, but not, as far as I can tell, from anything resembling an anarchistic and social revolutionary perspective. If it is true that the ruling ideas of an epoch are those of the ruling class—and its intellectual servants—then mild-mannered enemies of the state should be prepared to learn what there is to be learned from them.

Huntington's primary thesis is that, since the end of the cold war, the 19th-century conflict of nation-states and the 20th-century conflict of ideological blocs has given way to an underlying and supposedly more fundamental reality: the conflict of civilizations (in the plural). He schematically divides the world into several distinct civilizations corresponding roughly to the traditions of the world's major religions (e.g., Western Christianity, Orthodox Christianity,



Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.) that arose roughly between the 6th century B.C.E. and the 7th century C.E. Also included in this list is a "Sinic" civilization, indicating the Buddhist/Taoist/Confucianist syncretic complex of traditional Chinese culture, and Japan considered as a civilization unto itself. Huntington isn't sure whether to characterize Africa and Latin America as civilizations in their own right or as "dependent" subsets or extensions of Western civilization.

The classic civilizations arose mainly on the Eurasian continent, as alliances of throne and altar: religion backed by strong secular political authority, in turn supported by religion. Those religions of antiquity that did not gain and maintain the backing of strong imperial states (e.g., Manicheanism, Zoroastrianism) either disappeared or became greatly diminished in influence. Incipient civilizations of the Americas and sub-Saharan Africa never attained a similar degree of universality or, in Hegelian terms, "world-historical" significance. Some of these civilizations faded away on their own and were abandoned; others were eventually destroyed by or subsumed under Western civilization's grand colonialist enterprise.

Speaking of imperialism, Huntington is forthright in acknowledging the reality of 500 years of Western dominance over the rest of the world based on technological "superiority in applying organized violence,"

as well as the very significant role that this legacy of dominance and exploitation has played in the current resentments of non-Western peoples. However, this does not prevent him from recommending that we "maintain Western technological and military superiority over other civilizations."

The idea of civilization(s), whether as a singular or a plural concept, is relatively recent, with its origins in Anglo-French Enlightenment thought. Huntington recognizes the use of the concept of "civilization" by the European states of the 19th century as a colonialist conceit and yardstick by which to judge non-European societies of all kinds, but he still takes for granted that civilization as such, Western or non-Western, is right and proper: "Law and order is the first prerequisite of Civilization." To him civilization is nearly synonymous with culture (both material/technical and high or aesthetic culture), which is, to say the least, problematic in anthropological terms.

Huntington's view of history is not terribly original. He is a student of such historians as Spengler, Toynbee, and Carroll Quigley, which explains why a "Decline of the West" theme is very prominent in his book. The Euro-American Western world is, in his view, a "mature civilization" sliding into decay despite outward manifestations of continued dominance. The symptoms of this decline include falling birthrates, a declining share of the world's economic output, the erosion of military superiority, social disintegration (drugs, crime, anomie), and the growing repudiation of the work ethic. Numerous statistics are mobilized, and charts and graphs supplied, by way of illustration. Huntington's worldview assumes a certain tension in relations among all civilizations, but he sees the West now faced especially by the "challenger civilizations" of the Islamic world and the Greater China "co-prosperity sphere."

Huntington describes the evolution of the world political order from a "European international system" that reigned from the sixteenth century to its bloody demise in the paroxysms of the two world wars, followed by the age of East-West ideological confrontation in the containment of Bolshevism and the USSR, to the waning of ideology (if only!) with the American/Western victory in the cold war.

The European system before the French Revolution was characterized by wars among princes or between popes and em-

perors. With the bourgeois revolution in France came nationalism and the "wars of the peoples." Where did the United States fit into this? In the nineteenth century the U.S.A., preoccupied with resolving the problem of slavery and consolidating its own North American continental lebensraum expansion, held aloof from the European system, wanting to see itself as a unique civilization, or new Jerusalem, distinct from Europe. In the twentieth century, however, a broader identification with western Europe developed through the American alliances with Britain and France in the world wars. The exhaustion of the European powers in these wars, and the thwarting of Japan's imperial ambitions, enabled the United States to claim the position of global hegemony it enjoys today. Huntington observes that after World War II, (some) antagonisms internal to Western civilization have tended to become muted, offering as example the fading of the deep historical enmity between Protestants and Catholics. But he points to a bifurcation in the "identity" of Western civilization. One pole of "core states" remains rooted in continental Europe and turns on a Franco-German axis. The other is the United States, and in its train Britain and other, mostly English-speaking, countries such as Canada and Australia having origins as colonial-settler states of the British empire. Huntington frets that the West, particularly its U.S. flagship, is in danger of losing its identity.

At this point we might ask, what exactly is "the West," and when did it emerge? These are questions that Huntington himself puzzles over. The West didn't really become the West, he says, for reasons not entirely clear, until the time of Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire. Because religion is his bottom-line criterion for drawing the boundaries between civilizations, he settles on Latin (Roman) Christendom as the principal defining feature of Western civilization. This definition is broadened to include the various flavors of Protestantism as well as the Roman Catholic Church. The historical status of Jews in European Christendom, and the development of a new relationship between Christianity and Judaism in the United States, are not discussed at any length. He does list other defining "Western" features: a Greco-Roman classical legacy, the "rule of law," and (icing on the cake) parliamentary democracy and the "rights of man." But where did these components all come from? The western Roman empire had many of the features of "oriental despotism." Nor were human rights and freedom of expression exactly high on the agenda of medieval western

European feudalism, the society that Huntington identifies with the definitive emergence of Western civilization. Christianity in its origins was not a product of the West. And ancient Greece would not have been what it was without its encounters with other civilizations such as Egypt and Persia.

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This points to a problem with Huntington's classification scheme: he maintains that the classic civilizations all developed in relative isolation from one another, and treats them as if they were self-contained, completed works. He underestimates, though he is certainly aware of, their mutual influences and mutability. For example, the European Renaissance was strongly beholden to Islamic preservation of classical Greek scientific learning. Other examples include China absorbing Buddhism from India, and Japan in turn absorbing many elements of Chinese and Korean culture.

What emerges from this is a confusion: Huntington wants to show that there is no such thing as a universal civilization, but this leads him to identify the societies existing in the world today too closely with the "classic" (i.e., premodern) civilizations in his desire to pin down, and emphasize, their differences. He says that modernization and Westernization do not necessarily go together, which may be true enough. The West was the first region of the world to industrialize and modernize, but this process is now well under way throughout the entire world. The development of a world market through the mercantile colonialism of a

handful of western European states is what brought the various civilizations into sustained contact and conflict. It was during this era of conquest and direct colonial rule that the "clash of civilizations" was at its height, probably more than at present.

What is missing from *The Clash of Civilizations* is any meaningful analysis or critique of capital. The East has produced religions, Huntington says, whereas the West has produced ideologies (he even takes passing note of anarchism as one of these ideologies). What ideology is, how it developed in the course of class and national struggles of the last two centuries, what functions it serves, or how it differs from as well as complements religion as a form of mystification—none of this is Huntington's concern. Huntington sees history as a struggle among rising and falling civilizations rooted in religious identity and doesn't entertain any notion of the movement of history through social contradictions existing in all civilizations (i.e., class societies). He notes that Marxism is an ideological product of Western origin, but makes no effort to understand its relation to the workers' movement, and how it came ultimately to become a particular expression of the development of capital, especially in the non-Western world. He gives Marxism its grudging due when he states that, paradoxically, Russia was never so close to the West in its entire previous history as it was under Communism (i.e., because of certain shared goals of Marxism and bourgeois liberalism, such as progress, secularism, and universalism). Huntington sees the coming to power of Marxist regimes in Russia, China, and Vietnam as transitional from the European international system to a "post-European multicivilizational system." In other words, the so-called developing countries of the world have bootstrapped themselves, whether under a pro-Western or a neo-Bolshevik banner, into the material conditions of a crude market-dominated modernity whose excesses produce an "identity crisis" that drives those societies back to their classic "civilizational" roots. A good example of this would be China, where the Maoist frenzy of the Cultural Revolution nearly succeeded in destroying the traditional culture of that country. Huntington sees states as the only legitimate actors in history. There is no room in this vision for autonomous plebeian human activity at odds with the will of states or captains of industry, and no recognition of those strands of revolutionary thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that appeared as critical theory and practice, rather than ideology.

Although Huntington says that there is no such thing as a universal civilization in any meaningful sense, the modern industrial system that now encompasses most of the world, as fractured as it is, does form a kind of unity amid the global apparatus of telecommunications and omnipresence of mass culture commodities. Waves of industrialization and nationalism, which started in the West, have continued to wash over the world down to the present day. The particular background of any given region of the world in this or that classic civilization no longer offers any barrier, if it ever did, to the advance of industry, modernity, and capital's perfected domination. The persistence and periodic revivals of religion (*i.e.*, the values associated with the classic civilizations) in the contemporary world can be explained in part as attempts to hold on to a sense of order and community in a world made topsy-turvy and uprooted by urbanization and other effects of transnational capital. The disintegration of Western civilization that Huntington laments arises directly from capital's own perpetually revolutionary destructiveness. Unapproached here is the question of the parasitic and "replicant" nature of capital, and what relationships it bears to civilization and to nature both human and nonhuman. Fully developed capitalism destroys the culture of peoples, along with their premodern and pre-industrial communities, then sells it back to them in reconstituted forms, and thus is a society with essentially no culture of its own. For a while there was an urban culture of avant-garde transition and disintegration (*i.e.*, the various modernisms), but that went into syndication quite some time ago already.

Conflicts in the modern world that appear to be intercivilizational clashes (and there are still plenty of intracivilizational clashes, as Huntington acknowledges) are due more to countries being at different stages on the road to modernization within the international competitive market system. Within the last century, this has taken the form of rapidly industrializing "young" nations claiming a "place in the sun" denied them by entrenched, already developed powers. Fascism was in part a phenomenon of late-industrializing states with strong imperialist ambitions of their own portraying *themselves* as victims of imperialism. Marxism-Leninism (national bolshevism) offered a similar, though more "progressive," and—for a time—more successful model for large areas of the world during the extended collapse of the British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese colonial empires following World War II. The defeat and failure of Marxism as anti-imperialism now

leaves the field open to more atavistic rival ideologies such as Islamism. For Huntington, the set piece of Islam vs. the West (with or without Christianity) is the great once-and-future cold war of history. In his book he talks quite a bit about "Islam's bloody borders." The relationship of the Islamic *umma* to capital and community is a subject demanding further and better investigation than it gets in *The Clash of Civilizations*.

The process of ideological recomposition also holds true, albeit in more muted form, in the tension between the United States and China, whose neo-Confucian "Asian values" oppose "Western decadence." Huntington clearly recognizes the economic basis of the antagonism (*i.e.*, China is the rising economic power in Asia, which unsettles the American hegemony), but still insists on casting it in ideological terms as a clash of civilizations. Huntington keeps seeing a "Confucian-Islamic connection" (a slightly more sophisticated version of Bush Jr.'s "axis of evil") allied against the West. He bases this view mainly on weapons sales in recent years by People's China and North Korea to such Muslim countries as Pakistan and Iran. Since the current insurgence of Islamist movements courts China's subordinated Muslim nationalities, that would mean that China is arming its own enemies. As an international merchant of armaments, China is dwarfed by the United States, which has arms *its* own enemies too, but on a much bigger scale, as is the case in the current conflicts with Iraq and the Islamic fundamentalist terrorists.

The history of the United States as a land of refuge for the downtrodden and dispossessed of many nations and cultures poses certain problems for Huntington's civilizational categorization scheme, and he is aware of this. In the past, immigration into the U.S.A. came largely from within—because it was largely restricted to—the broad sphere of Western civilization. Today there is large-scale immigration from every part of the world. In the past immigrants were under pressure, largely successful, to assimilate to a "white" cultural standard set by the country's mostly Anglo-Germanic and Protestant ruling class. The new immigrants are rather less amenable to such assimilation, and the political climate no longer sanctions it. That the United States is steadily becoming less European-rooted and less Christian (or less Judeo-Christian), and in which even the dominance of the English language is starting to erode, is a reality Huntington is uncomfortable with. A longtime liberal turned increasingly conservative, Huntington is worried that the United States cannot survive as a "country of

many civilizations," so he takes aim at multiculturalism, which he fears will facilitate the balkanization of the U.S.A. It is curious that he denounces identity politics, yet his concept of a world order based on civilizations with unique and essential identities is a form of just that! A society increasingly without a cultural core, the United States is more of an ideological notion (*e pluribus unum*, the Union) than a historic nation in the European sense. The erosion of the American Creed, American Dream, or whatever you want to call the utopian ideological cement and civil religion of the United States (an ever-expanding democracy of individualism and material consumption), could turn out to be the nightmare that's haunting Huntington. But it might instead become an opportunity for the emergence of a new human community from the deracinated remains of civilizations both old and modern. As the United States attempts to rule the world, it is not so much the world that will become Americanized as it is America that will become the world in microcosm.

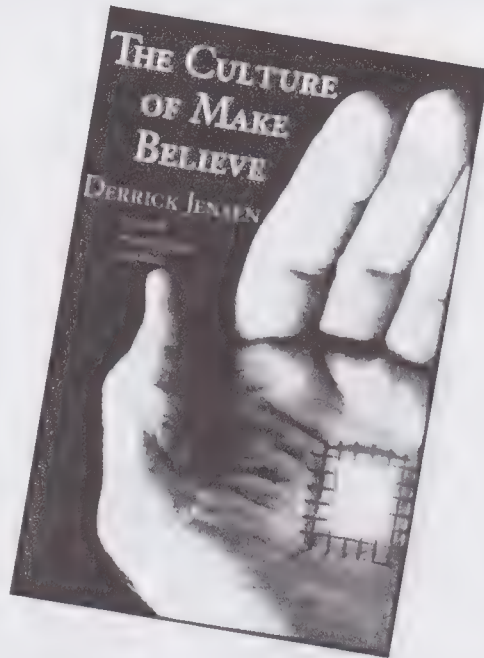
Huntington hopes, though not very convincingly, for a "renewal" of Western civilization that would include, among other things, an instauration of (mainstream) religion and an abandonment of pretensions of universalism. This would mean, in effect, renouncing the secular universalist ideological evangelism of the American and French revolutions. He states, with good reason, that the universalist belief that the rest of the world ought to adopt Western values, institutions, and culture entails imperialism. The implied isolationism of this stance, however, doesn't seem likely to find favor with the policymaking circles of the U.S. government or the capitalist (particularly petroleum) interests they serve, which remain as committed as ever to the interventionist actions necessary to maintain global dominance. The current buildup to another war with Iraq, and possibly other countries, is an ample indication of this. In the twentieth century the United States waged war with one East Asian country after another. The new century may well be one in which America goes to war with one Muslim country after another as the Great Game, call it a "clash of civilizations," or whatever, continues. The unfolding prospect of war without end promises fresh atrocities on both sides. And it represents a big gamble by the masters of this world—a gamble they might lose if the costs, burdens, and chaos thereby unleashed provoke the workforce of the planet into a general questioning and practical critique of civilization(s) rather than a submission to mobilization in their service.

The Culture of Make Believe

Review by Lawrence Jarach

The Culture of Make Believe by Derrick Jensen (Context Books, New York, 2002) 701 pp. \$18.00 paper.

The study group that I'm part of recently went to hear Jensen read from his latest book at a the Berkeley Ecology Center as a field trip (the event took place on the same night we normally meet). What we noticed most of all was the crowd: almost everyone was a liberal environmentalist. Of the numerous caricatures of what people think of when they hear "Berkeley" (which of course annoy locals), the crowd at the Ecology Center that night fit at least some of them. For those of the group who'd read this or Jensen's previous book (*A Language Older than Words*), he sounded great; for those of us who hadn't read much or anything by him, it was more difficult. As a writer and speaker—or more correctly, narrator of his book—Jensen seems very aware of the politics of his audience. While he is not shy about wanting to see civilization crumble into dust, the way he approaches this topic (at least that night with the liberals, if not in the book) makes it possible for his audience to find it all too amusing. People clapped when he said that civilization needs to go; they chuckled when he said that each morning he wakes up and wonders if today he'll blow up a dam. Liberals can snicker and applaud at these ideas because they know that Jensen can't possibly be serious, that he's just playing with his imagination; after all, he's one of their own.



Anarchists (especially green anarchists or anarcho-primitivists) of course know that he's dead serious; after all, he's one of their own. My problem is that both groups are right. Jensen made it seem that he agreed with everyone who was in the audience.

Reading through the book after that night (and it's an easy read—I made it through in a week), I kept wanting to read that he was going to embrace our club (anarchs). There were enough seething critiques of slavery and capitalism (if they can truly be separated), general disgust and anger at the follies

of Euro-American culture to fill any anarchist with a long list of targets. But I couldn't figure out why—with the relentless stories of brutality, contempt, and destructive savagery that Euro-Americans have perpetrated against indigenous people, non-Europeans, and the Earth, and ultimately themselves—Jensen isn't more explicitly on our side. I certainly want him to be. He is sympathetic (there are anarchists in his book), but there seems to be enough of something left that won't allow him to break with mainstream acceptability. For me, the book showcases that being against civilization isn't quite enough. A healthy distrust of statecraft and other forms of hierarchy need to be embraced as well; otherwise the idea of civilization gets reduced to dams, clearcuts, and environmental racism, leaving the larger issues of institutional domination untouched. To be fair, Jensen does approach these other issues, just not in a very coherent manner. There's enough missing in the book to allow liberals to "fill in the blanks" with their own agenda of lobbying for stronger environmental laws while at the same time permitting radicals to "fill in the blanks" with their own ideas of blowing up dams. Such ambivalence makes it possible for Jensen to write about despair without becoming inert, without throwing up his hands and walking away from the whole stinking mess. His next book is to be about how to bring about the destruction of civilization. Hopefully it will contain less ambiguity.

Platform shoes...

Continued from page 15

lutionary militias and the counter-revolutionary People's Army.

Anticipating criticism, the Platformists sought to discount it in advance by attributing it to rabid individualists. "We foresee that several representatives of self-styled individualism and chaotic anarchism will attack us, foaming at the mouth, and accuse us of breaking anarchist principles." Instead, they were attacked by the most prominent collectivist anarchists: Voline, Malatesta, Fabbri, Nettlau and Berkman. (With a similar if even cruder ploy, a recent convert to organizationalism, Bookchin, denounces

his self-appointed enemies as individualists, although David Watson, John Zerzan, L. Susan Brown and the rest are, without exception, collectivists). The Platformists are testy about accusations that the Platform is "only one step away from bolshevism, a step that the authors of the Platform do not dare to take" ("Some Russian Anarchists")—but the principal author, Arshinov, took that step, returning to Stalinist Russia in 1933, only to be liquidated in 1937.

That the *Organizational Platform* is on its face a betrayal of anarchism is almost the least of its vices. It is fundamentally false in its historical method, positing an imaginal, vaguely defined revolutionary class as an eternal, immutable historical presence—not as something with real spatial or temporal

coordinates, something repeatedly self-created but never in quite the same form or with exactly the same meaning. It calls for an organization so strongly predisposed to oligarchy that it might have been designed for that purpose. It offers a formula for victory conceived by losers. Above all, it contradictorily demands an organization at once inclusive and orthodox. It cannot command inclusion, but it can impose orthodoxy, and it clearly states that it will do so. The result is yet another sect. A project with the announced purpose of eliminating the confusing multiplicity of anarchist organizations only increases the multiplicity by adding one more.

One Man in His Time

From Nazi and the SS, to the CND, War Resisters and anarchism

Review by Peter McGregor

One Man in His Time, Hans Post as told to his friend, Michael Morley (Oxford Press, 40 Station Rd, Otford NSW 2508, Australia [web site: www.otfordpress.com.au] 2002) 430 pp. \$39.95 hardcover.

Hans tells an amazing & inspiring story. It's a historically significant autobiography by an only child, born 1926, to a pro-Nazi middle-class family in Silesia. The cover of this latest book by the new, independent, social justice publisher, Otford Press conveys the distance of the journey travelled. The colours of black and red, signify both Nazism and anarchism. And we see the icons: from Nazi and the SS, to the CND, War Resisters and anarchism.

Hans metamorphosed from a childhood and youth successfully immersed in Nazi, authoritarian culture, to come-of-age as an adult choosing pacifist, anarchist and egalitarian ways. It's the kind of journey that the German playwright Peter Weiss imagined in his play *Marat/Sade*, where: "the most important thing is to pull yourself up by your own hair, to turn yourself inside out, and to see the world with fresh eyes." Hans' life reveals both the appetite for justice latent in each of us, and the capacity to change oneself, as a way to also change society. Hans' book confirms the validity of an epistemology of common sense—that a mixture of experience, cognition and compassion in the hearts and minds of any of us, not just the learned, is the best distiller of wisdom.

Hans was precocious, in joining the Hitler Youth at 8, rapidly advancing as a leader therein, volunteering for the Waffen SS at only 17, and joining Skorzeny's elite unit in July 1944. His enthusiasm shows: "In many ways what we did in the Jungvolk was more interesting to me than what went on in school—it was an exciting and colourful time for me." And, "Ecstasy is when the Fuhrer hangs the Knight's Cross or the Iron Cross around your neck!"

Hans sees action in three of the Skorzeny Kommando's special missions: bringing Hungarian leader von Horthy back to Germany and arresting his rebellious son; the unsuccessful attempt, during the Battle of the Bulge, to kidnap Eisenhower in Paris by donning American uniforms and crossing US lines; and another unsuccessful attempt at capturing (German) General Paulus from behind the Soviet front. (By the end of the



war Skorzeny was called "the most dangerous man in Europe.") Hans is awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class from the Eisenhower mission, and the Iron Cross, First Class for destroying two Soviet tanks during the Paulus mission.

Hans is interned in 17 POW camps over 15 months, including 9 months in Thoree-les-Pins, where only 1300 of 3600 SS prisoners survived.¹

In the aftermath of the war Hans starts to undertake Weiss' journey. He marries into a communist family and they settle in West Germany with Hans working as a coal-miner and becoming a union delegate. As Adenauer reintroduces conscription in 1954, Hans and Lydia become outspokenly anti-

war and anti-conscription. By 1959, in despair they abandon Germany, and with their three kids, migrate to Australia. Hans finds work in the Wollongong steelworks, and they engage with their new country. While Hans, once again, becomes a radical union delegate, Lydia's community activism is pivotal in the establishment of Family Planning clinics in Wollongong and Port Kembla. And, once again, they are outspoken in their opposition to war and conscription—for the Vietnam war. Hans' letters-to-the-editor get published: "saying I had been in the SS, I was sick of war, and (that) we needed a new kind of society." Namely a pacifist and anarchist society. Suddenly in 1975, at the age of 47, Lydia dies of a heart attack. Recovering from deep depression, Hans falls in love with Gina, a mutual friend—and political colleague—of himself and Lydia. Gina is a Jewish, anti-war feminist. "The first 18 months weren't easy. One time when we went to bed, Gina pointed at my SS tattoo and said, 'What is this?' She knew about it, but she had completely blanked it out."

Little wonder that the introduction to the book warns us that Hans' story seems larger than life.

The book is written in an engaging and personable style, revealing an impressive memory, and giving us a feel for the varying times. Hans notes crucial turning points, as if it's been an intentional, developmental journey. Because this isn't just a story for its own sake: it's like a self-help book, offering us something that we need—helping us understand what is wrong with our world and showing us how to change it for the better. The last photograph in the book is of Hans—smiling, carrying a CND banner on Hiroshima Day, Sydney 1995.

NOTE:

1. As oral histories, Hans' book, together with that of a friend who was a fellow inmate of the Thoree-les-Pins POW camp—Hans Joachim Finke's *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit* (2000)—corroborate the research of James Bacque's *Other Losses: An Investigation into the Mass Deaths of German Prisoners at the Hands of the French and Americans After World War II* (1999). Bacque found that one million German prisoners of war died from May 1945 to 1949 in POW camps like Thoree-les-Pins.

It's the kind of journey that the German playwright Peter Weiss imagined in his play *Marat/Sade*, where: "the most important thing is to pull yourself up by your own hair, to turn yourself inside out, and to see the world with fresh eyes."

Anarchism in Turkey

Against industrialization and westernization

Review by Jeff Shantz

Anarchism in Turkey: A Short History of Anarchism in Turkey by Mine Ege (Karambol Publications, POB 1681, London, N8 7L, U.K., [web version: http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/turkey/hist_turkey.html], undated) no price listed, pamphlet.

Very little is currently available about anarchist activity in Turkey. That is why this brief pamphlet is such a welcome find. While short on details it does at least provide a starting point for anyone trying to find out more about anarchism in Turkey.

The author begins by stating that the history of anarchism in Turkey is very short. The anarchist movement emerged only around 1986 with the publication of the monthly magazine *Kara*. This is not to say that anarchist individuals were not active in Turkey before then, but there was never anything resembling a political movement.

Ege asks why almost every other Western radical movement has developed in Turkey but not anarchism. The short answer is that revolutionary movements in Turkey, like elsewhere, have been dominated by Marxism. One reason for this is the overwhelming preoccupation with questions of "modernization" and "westernization." With the exception of fundamentalist Islamist groups, all major political tendencies in Turkey have favoured rapid economic industrialization and cultural westernization. Turkish Marxists have shared the positivist approach to progress and development of the ruling class.

The Marxists also shared with the ruling elite a commitment to building a strong state for the purposes of implementing the projects of industrialization and westernization.

Anarchism has historically stood opposed to these dual projects of capitalization and this has, until recently, left it marginalized with respect to political currents in Turkey. It has, of course, also made it more threatening to ruling elites. Anarchism, sharing no political ground with the state, is not so easily manipulated to advance statist goals.

The change in Turkey in the 1980s relates to the worldwide disintegration of Marxism and locally to the military coup and subsequent crushing of Marxist movements. Many revolutionaries came to reject Marxist progressivism and statism and turned to anarchism as the only way to achieve a

...the history of anarchism in Turkey is very short. The anarchist movement emerged only around 1986 with the publication of the monthly magazine *Kara*. This is not to say that anarchist individuals were not active in Turkey before then, but there was never anything resembling a political movement.

classless and stateless society. Others tired of the Leninist approach to organizing and found in anarchism a real defence of individual liberties which were denied in the Party.

Anti-authoritarian circles emerged and began sharing ideas through magazines such as *Yeni Olgu* and *Akintiya Karsi*. Eventually Sokak Publishing House was established by ex-Marxists who had become anti-authoritarians. Their first publication was appropriately Ida Mett's *Kronstadt 1921*.

Between 1986-1989 most anarchist activity was directed towards publications and the dissemination of anarchist perspectives. There was little organization and most anarchist circles and communes consisted of students. During the period 1989-1991, there were no periodicals in Turkey but the interest in anarchism increased. Non-anarchist publishing houses began to publish books related to anarchism.

In 1992 a pacifist, anti-militarist publication, *Amargi* appeared. The following year *Ates Hirsizi* came out in Istanbul with a revolutionary perspective. These papers along with the theoretical paper *Apolitica* are still published. Anarchists began open participation in May Day celebrations in 1993.

The pamphlet concludes with brief discussions of issues of importance to anarchists in Turkey. Among these is, of course the Kurdish national liberation movement. Ege writes against the repression of the Kurdish people and against the nationalist and Stalinist Kurdish leadership. Another important factor which Turkish anarchists

must address is fundamentalist Islamist movements. Ege points out that the military regime intentionally promoted Islamic fundamentalism as a means to stoke patriotism while marginalizing other political perspectives. Ege stresses that Turkish anarchists have to deal with the fact that many non-elites turn to fundamentalism as a reaction against the brutalities of Turkish capitalism.

"From this point of view, we should try to understand the Islamic radicalism as a complex issue which is both an obstacle for the revolution and a signal of discontent of the masses from the system" (Ege).

Left wing political parties are largely irrelevant with the Social Democrats reduced to a tool of the ruling centre-right party (DYP). The idea of revolution is not particularly popular.

"The society in Turkey lives [in the] full corruption of the capitalist system. All moral, political and economic institutions of the country [are] in explicit corruption. And everybody knows that and nobody does anything about it. In these conditions an anarchist movement could be the flag of the hatred of the masses against corruption" (Ege).

To do that, the author concludes, anarchists will have to move from being more than a student movement and reach outside of its currently small circles. Ege suggests that doing that will require an emphasis on social revolutionary currents of anarchism instead of individualist and pacifist perspectives which are currently popular.

Bury the Turkish Republic

Review by Jeff Shantz

"We Come to Bury the Turkish Republic, Not to Praise It": Fundamentalism, Nationalism, and Militarism in Turkey by The Fifth of May Group (POB 2474, London, N8 OHW, U.K., undated) no price listed, pamphlet.

This short but informative pamphlet was put together by the Fifth of May Group (FMG), a group of Turkish and Kurdish anarchists in exile.

Continued on page 24

The Tyranny of Structurelessness

An organizational repudiation of anarchism

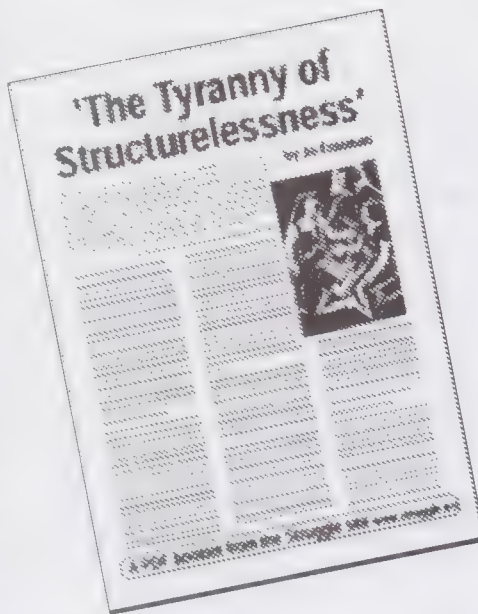
Review by Jason McQuinn

The Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman (Workers' Solidarity Movement, POB 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland, 1989; Also available from the web site: <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/wsm/>) 5 pp., no price listed, pamphlet.

Not too surprisingly, whenever organizational, leftist anarchist tendencies cast about for justification for their amalgamations of anarchist theory with leftist politics, they invariably seem to latch on to Jo Freeman's now quite dated essay titled *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*. In fact, the recently spreading infatuation with the *Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists* by Peter Arshinov, Nestor Makhno *et al* amongst some less self-critical and more leftist anarchists has led to quite a proliferation of anarchist web sites featuring Freeman's not-too-veiled attack on anarchist theories of organization.

The avowedly platformist Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland has both released yet another edition of the essay as a pamphlet, along with making this edition available for .pdf download from its web site. A quick Google internet search netted 322 hits for the essay, where it appears to be by far most popular on anarchist web sites, primarily leftist sites—like the “International Anarchism web pages,” the NEFAC web site, the *Onward* web site—and archives like the Spunk Library site. It's also still popular as a more explicitly anarchist-bashing reference—on web sites like Ken Knabb's Bureau of Public Secrets, the World Socialists site, reformist/statist Green sites, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) web site, and a few sundry authoritarian or reformist pacifist sites. While it may still ultimately be cited the most as a now somewhat curious historical document from the early days of the feminist movement revival of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since the essay is really an attack on the “structureless groups” of the consciousness-raising stage of the feminist movement, these latter citations obviously make the most sense, especially if one actually reads the document.

A nutshell description of Freeman's essay on one anarchist web site (www.anarchism.ws/) is given as: “Why organisations need some structure to ensure they are democratic.” But—at least since the demise of the consciousness-raising



stage of the feminist movement—everyone already agrees with Freeman that the whole issue of structure vs. structurelessness was always a red herring. All social groups, whether they're formal or informal, have some sort of structure. The actual argument of the essay would more accurately be stated as “Why formal political organizations are better than anarchistic forms of organization.” For this reason alone when self-described anarchists uncritically cite this essay or load it onto their web sites it is somewhat akin to uncritically citing Marxist-Leninist or Stalinist tracts on the necessity for political parties. This is confused and nonsensical at the best; at worst it is simply a betrayal of anarchist principles.

As the bizarre title, *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*, hints, the essay reads like a closely argued, but incomprehensibly unreal and illogical stab at sociology by a paranoid schizophrenic. The fear of freedom, friendship and community, as well as the fetish for sterile, reified, rule-bound relationships (drained of all spontaneity and vitality) oozes from almost every page. It goes without saying that the author is not, nor has she ever been, an anarchist. From the text, one gets the impression that she doesn't think anarchy could ever be a possible social goal for any rational person, much less that it could ever actually come

to pass. She *did* participate in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement long ago. But, as a biographical sketch indicates, she did so *as a critic* of the radicals. She also participated in the civil rights movement and the rebirth of the feminist movement, but again, never as any kind of radical libertarian. She is now a political scientist and lawyer with an ongoing interest in the highly reified world of political parties, where “tyranny” is no longer such a problem for her since there are no insidious “structureless groups” to worry about!

From some of the author's autobiographical comments and from the type of people typically attracted to her arguments, it becomes clear that *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* primarily appeals to bookish, socially-incompetent—or anti-social—people interested in politics, but unsure of themselves or unwilling (or unable) to negotiate social relationships which aren't based on written rules of order with formal roles. The ambiguities, spontaneity and informality of mutual friendships and communal relationships tend to provoke anxieties in such people that the security, hierarchy, leadership and discipline of authoritarian organizations are designed to relieve.

Freeman's fundamental insight in the essay is that informal groups are susceptible to power struggles involving many of the pitfalls more commonly and easily observed in large, formal organizations. And, of course, not many people would disagree. But in her mind the ever-present, looming dangers of small, informal groups always dwarf the minimal problems that so rarely pop up in formal organizations like political parties! You see, the latter have explicit rules, formal leaders and agreed-upon membership roles that maximize effectiveness while minimizing the irresponsible, elitist, undemocratic excesses to which informal groups are so defenseless.

For any genuine anarchists these arguments will appear as paranoid, schizoid and nauseatingly opportunistic as they do when they are parroted in authoritarian leftist publications (and web sites like that of the ISO), where they are used like clubs to bash those nasty, undisciplined, but dictatorial anarchists who don't ever give authoritarian socialists a fair chance to be elected into leadership positions in the anarchist movement.

In actuality, the potential problems Freeman is most worried about in informal groups, are much more prevalent, virulent and destructive in large, formal organizations. However, the believers in and proponents of such groups simply don't bother to worry about them there, partly because other problems particular to formal organizations are more obvious, and partly since such people are and were never really worried about the fundamental problems of personal and social freedom in the first place—only in their reified, political representation (and thus falsification).

Freeman specifically focusses her Kafkaesque critique on four problems.

(1) She alleges that "structureless" or—for our purposes here—small, informal libertarian groups function as a "smoke-screen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others." This is because "As long as the structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules." And "For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a given group...the structure must be explicit, not implicit." Obviously, the problem alleged can potentially happen—once in a *great* while. It is equally obvious that it's much more common (because it's probably a hell of a lot easier) for "the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others" by starting or taking over formal organizations. After all why bother with blowing "smokescreens" to hide a shaky hegemony over a small, informal group when it's easier to insinuate yourself into powerful roles in formal organizations? Freeman's claim that the reason why some people allow themselves to be dominated by others is that only those doing the dominating know the informal group structures is ridiculous on its face. Informal group structure isn't occult. It's a function of intersubjective negotiation and mutual expectations. People who allow themselves to be dominated in informal groups will also allow themselves to be dominated in formal groups—and probably more easily and often in the latter simply because a structure for domination is going to be much more often present from the outset!

(2) Freeman alleges that elitism is much more of a problem in small, informal groups than it is in formal organizations. Her reason for this is essentially the ludicrous definition she gives to elitism: "Elites are nothing more, and nothing less, than groups of friends who also happen to participate in the same political activities." For this reason, "An individual, as an individual, can

never be an elitist" (because an individual isn't a *group of friends!*). And thus, there must not be any great problem with capitalist elites, political elites or international elites, unless there really *are* groups of friends involved "who also *happen* [my emphasis] to participate in the same politi-

As the bizarre title,...hints, the essay reads like a closely argued, but incomprehensibly unreal and illogical stab at sociology by a paranoid schizophrenic. The fear of freedom, friendship and community, as well as the fetish for sterile, reified, rule-bound relationships (drained of all spontaneity and vitality) oozes from almost every page.

cal activities." And this stupidity was written by a then future political scientist! Talk about blowing "smokescreens" to hide hegemony! For Freeman we only need to worry about elites made up of friends in informal groups. Everything else in more "democratic" formal organizations like political parties is so egalitarian that it doesn't even need to be mentioned.

(3) Freeman argues that the "Star" system [her strange quotes around 'Star'] was created by "the idea of structurelessness." Even assuming that she is restricting her analysis to the feminist milieu, such an argument makes little or no sense in a spectacular-commodity society in which star systems abound in just about every sphere of public life, and yet none of the other spheres are so terribly burdened with informal organizations as was the feminist milieu of the 1960s and 1970s. Once again, many of the potential problems she describes with the star system are just as prevalent or more prevalent where formal organizations are the rule. But that doesn't concern her. For Freeman, only stars created in the context of informal groups are really bad.

(4) Freeman thinks that informal groups are politically impotent. Obviously, in the sense of participation in the formal, statist political system this is going to be true. Forming political parties and mass organizations, or raising millions of dollars in corporate contributions are never going to be what informal groups are good at. However, as any anarchist knows, libertarian organizations can and have accomplished everything necessary for individuals and communities

to live in free, egalitarian, convivial societies—both long-term in hunting and gathering communities and more transitorily in modern revolutionary periods. Just because anarchist groups are often small and informal, it doesn't follow that they can't or haven't employed elements of formal organization whenever and wherever they've been appropriate and necessary.

Finally, Freeman recommends a short list of "principles of democratic structuring." Here, at last she actually has something to say, although most of her suggestions are just as appropriate (or moreso) for informal groups as for formal ones and will work with either. She suggests the lot system, which has been used by informal anarchist groups many times historically. Then there is "delegation" of "specific tasks," "rotation of tasks," "allocation of tasks along rational criteria," "diffusion of information to everyone as frequently as possible," and "equal access to resources needed by the group." Each of these suggestions are far more commonly accomplished by informal libertarian groups than by any but a small number of the most radical of the formal organizations of the world, including formal anarchist organizations. And they can be recommended for any organization, whether it's formal or informal.

The two suggestions Freeman makes that I don't list above are explicitly based on authoritarian assumptions—"distribution of authority among as many people as is reasonably possible" (anathema to anarchists in the sense of political authority that she apparently includes in her meaning) and "requiring all those to whom authority has been delegated to be responsible to those who selected them." Tell that to the politicians you elect, suckers! Given her decades of work within the Democratic Party Freeman remains oblivious to the much more widespread and devastating tyrannies of capitalism, statism and organizationalism.

As a critique of informal anarchist organization, it should be obvious that *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* is a complete dud. As an anti-anarchist rant it will always have its uses for anti-anarchist politicians of all stripes, but for genuine anarchists it will remain a useless document functioning as a "smokescreen" for the multitude of potential abuses inherent in formal organizations of all kinds (including anarchist organizations), and especially in intentionally authoritarian formal organizations. We need to be on guard for authoritarian, hierarchical, dominating and exploitative relationships in every sphere of society. Just don't expect too find many of these in informal organizations.

Bury the Turkish Republic

Continued from page 21

"The Fifth of May is an anarchist group that includes anarchists from different tendencies, and has a pluralist perspective. This pluralist perspective together with the idea of individual autonomy form the basis of group harmony. We have no fixed political line and rigid principles. However, we believe that it is important to fight against nationalism and militarism on the basis of class. It is also crucial to fight against sexism and racism." (FMG)

The Group's activities include translating anarchist literature into Turkish, publishing pamphlets and articles in Turkish and English and a campaign against compulsory military service in Turkey. The first part of this pamphlet outlines the emergence of political parties since the founding of the Republic of Turkey (1923) detailing their attempts to manipulate Islamic conservatives against the emerging youth and workers' movements. The state was aided in this, directly and indirectly, by funding from the developing capitalists.

In the 1970s the state instigated the pogroms carried out by members of the fascist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). This practice of state utilization of fundamentalist Islamic movements continued through the military coup of 1980. The military benefitted from the fundamentalists' capacity to pacify people while the fundamentalists made use of the opportunity to climb the ladders of power.

According to the authors, many statist leftists in Turkey have not understood this relationship, even going so far as siding with the army against the fundamentalists. "The fact remains that this is fundamentally a power struggle between two forces, which are not principally very different from each other, rather than being a conflict between the two systems" (FMG). The fundamentalist movement in Turkey differs from those in Algeria and Iran in being a modernist force made up of many businessmen.

From the mid-1990s the Islamist movement's Welfare Party (RP) became the largest right-wing party gaining the majority in parliament. That caused concern for the military rulers and in 1997 they forced the government to resign and suppressed the RP.

Nationalism has been expressed largely through the repression of various ethnic groups, most notably Kurds and Turkish Cypriots. Details are provided for each of those struggles including background infor-

mation about the left nationalist groups.

The Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK) split from the broader left in Turkey and began by attacking other Kurdish and Turkish left groups to establish its power base by force. As long as the PKK was destroying other left groups the state did not interfere

"It was inevitable that the leftist organisations would lose their 'charm'..., considering that these organisations ignored and scorned the idea[s] of freedom, individual initiative and organisational democracy, while they praised 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' and 'the vanguard party.'...."

Many turned to anarchism, feminism and libertarian socialism. Movements emerged in larger cultural centres such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir.

"The era of parties has ended...."

with their actions. Between 1990-1996, however, the state moved to stop the guerrillas and used secret gangs, backed by the army, to murder thousands of Kurdish people and destroy thousands of villages.

"We have always been in support of the struggle of Kurdish people against the nation state. This, however, does not mean we support nationalist and patriotic feelings of the oppressed people, nor does it mean we support the PKK, an organisation that wants to create its own state." (FMG)

The FMG has also stood in solidarity with Turkish Cypriots against the Turkish state's policies of assimilation, settlement and forced immigration in Northern Cyprus. They are working to build solidarity between Turkish, Greek and Kurdish anarchists in order to fight against the chauvinistic policies of the Turkish and Greek states.

After the military coup of 1980 people sought avenues for liberty and freedom. This caused many to leave the confinement of the Stalinist left parties.

"It was inevitable that the leftist organisations would lose their 'charm' particularly in the eyes of leftist people, considering that these organisations ignored and scorned the idea[s] of freedom, individual

initiative and organisational democracy, while they praised 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' and 'the vanguard party.'" (FMG)

Many turned to anarchism, feminism and libertarian socialism. Movements emerged in larger cultural centres such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir.

"The era of parties has ended. Even their members and followers agree on the fact that all parties are miniature versions of the tyrannical states and bureaucracies of the future. In this regard, what is dead is not only Marxism, but also liberalism, the creator of party systems. This also explains the new interest in anarchist ideas." (FMG)

This is a useful pamphlet which also includes a helpful chronology of Turkish history since 1908 and a list of active political parties and associations. Anyone seeking an introduction to the political situation in Turkey from an anarchist perspective would do well to pick up this pamphlet.

Twelve Fingers

Review by Lawrence Jarach

Twelve Fingers; Biography of an Anarchist by Jo Soares, translated by Clifford E. Landers (Vintage Books, New York, 2001) 303 pp. \$13.00 paper.

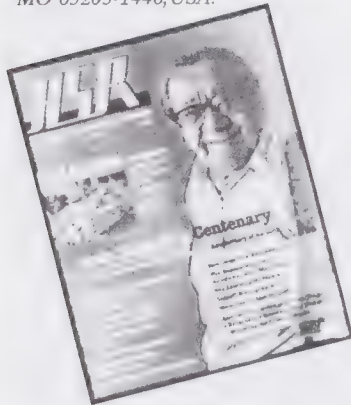
This novel takes the reader from Brazil in 1897 to Sarajevo to Paris to Miami to Los Angeles and back to Rio in 1954. In between we are treated to some of the most famous people who populated those places at those times. We are also treated to some of the most ridiculous caricatures of what anarchism means.

Throughout, Dimitri the anarchist (who has two extra index fingers, one on each hand) seems only interested in murder. He first learns his trade with the militarized, anti-monarchist Serbian nationalists of the Union or Death movement (responsible for the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, which precipitated the first world war—an event that seems to fill Dimitri with happiness). If there weren't enough contradictions in that tableau, many others follow, from Dimitri becoming a mob hit-man to becoming involved with the obscurantists of the Moslem Brotherhood.

The book is supposed to be funny, but I found it annoying because Dimitri was never believable as an anarchist. In Soares' novel, Dimitri (standing in for anarchists in general) is clumsy; ultimately he's an inept buffoon. Soares has revisited an insulting caricature of anarchists.

Anarchy is once again exchanging with all other anarchist and genuinely radical (anti-state, anti-capitalist) periodicals. And we will continue to try to review all such periodicals received in future issues. All reviews in this issue are by Jason McQuinn, except those marked [LJ] for Lawrence Jarach, [WL] for Wolfi Landstreicher or [MW] for Michael William.

Publishers please note: To ensure that your publications are reviewed in future issues, send all zines and magazines to our current reviewer address: C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA.



ASR: ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST REVIEW

#35-36/Fall 2002 (POB 2824, Champaign, IL 61825) is a 56-page quarterly promoting anarchist unionism. The Fall issue features tributes to (and reprints from the writing of) late, long-time anarcho-syndicalist Sam Dolgoff on the hundredth anniversary of his birth. Although some of his publishing work (notably his anthology *Bakunin on Anarchy*) has been very beneficial and useful to the anarchist milieu, he was unfortunately also (as even some of his supporters and friends admit) a very narrow-minded and sectarian old syndicalist, which limited his influence. Two reviews in this issue of Dolgoff's essay "The Relevance of Anarchism to Modern Society" (by Brian Sheppard & Jeff Shantz) celebrate some of the worst aspects of his writing. Also included is a reprint of his dated essay on "Kropotkin's Revolutionary Philosophy." This is the magazine for those who believe there is still some life in the ideal of anarchist industrial unions. Subscriptions are \$15/4 issues.

BARRICADE

Agitational Monthly of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists

#18-19[double issue]/Oct. 2002 (POB 73, Boston, MA 02133; web site: www.barricada.org) is the

Anarchist press review

Compiled by Jason McQuinn, Lawrence Jarach, Wolfi Landstreicher and Michael William

militant monthly zine of the Barricada Collective, a member of NEFAC. It may well be the only anarchist monthly in North America at this time. This 40-page double-issue includes anti-racist and union news, along with accounts of shutting down a talk by ex-Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in Montreal and the eviction of the Chevrotiere squat, as well as a section on Eastern European news. There's also a "Critical Analysis" of NEFAC's attempt at organizing its "Festival del Pueblo" this past spring, and a piece "On the Question of the Revolutionary Anarchist Organization" indicating that NEFAC remains confused about its adoption of platformism, supposedly retaining autonomous collectives and advocating "revolutionary pluralism" (both in direct contradiction to platformism), while still accepting other major platformist positions. The cover price is now \$3; subscriptions are \$15/6 issues.



BLACK BADGER

#5/undated (POB 508, Berkeley, CA 94701-0508; e-mail: blackbadger23@juno.com) is an entertaining, unpaginated anarchist personal zine. So far each issue has been far better by far than the average zine, and this one is no exception. This issue includes "Excerpts from a letter to a Wobbly" (covering very important aspects of post-left critique and the relation of fascism to syndicalism), a correspondence discussion on organization, and "Badger Thoughts on Work & Class Struggle." Sample copies are still \$2 postpaid.



BLACK FLAG

#222/undated (BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX, England) is a 40-page anarcho-syndicalist magazine, subtitled "For Anarchist Resistance," now with a colorful, glossy cover sure to get it more attention on newsstands. This issue features a piece on privatization and gentrification in one of the London boroughs, an interesting and timely look at "Justice—A Bourgeois Concept?" (yes, of course it is!), a very confused piece on "Changing the way we think of Direct Action" (in which the author quotes Marx & Camatte before going on to argue for a recuperative reformism and a leftist "dual power" strategy), and an interesting interview with a couple French anarchists (despite its initial focus on left opposition to Le Pen). Last but not least, every issue includes an "Anarcho-Quiz"! This has been one of my favorite anarchist reads for decades, and it's good to see the magazine getting back in stride after a several-year slowdown. The cover price is £2; subscriptions are £10/4 issues.

CHICAGO ABC ZINE

#1/undated (South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, POB 721, Homewood, IL 60430) is the new 60-page prisoner support zine of the Chicago Anarchist Black Cross. This issue features info the Chicago ABC, prisoner projects (including Harold Thompson's case against prison censorship of anarchist materials—an ever increasing problem—and Jerome White-Bey's attempt to form a prison union in Missouri), along with a few analyses of as-

pects of the criminal (in)justice system. Send \$2 for a copy. Free to all prisoners.

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

#114/July-Aug. through #116/Nov.-Dec. 2002 (POB 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501) is a 32-page assortment of letters and reprinted articles primarily from the anti-market, non-statist radical milieu. The July-August issue features a reprint of Louis Prisco's confusionist attempt at a survey of "What's left of the left?"—which he's subtitled "Is post-leftist anarchist-primitivism a cure for political pessimism? Or is it a symptom?" (It's not clear why 1/3 of this issue was devoted to reprinting this piece, since Prisco is unable to distinguish between primitivist, post-leftist and post-modernist theories, resulting in a mushy analysis which doesn't lead anywhere, especially since he himself doesn't appear to have much understanding of the critique of capitalism!) The Nov.-Dec. issue includes a discussion of the capitalist nature of unions, an attempt at clarification by Louis Prisco of his "What's Left...?" article noted above, and a reprint of "An Eco-socialist Manifesto" (a somewhat tepid call for "limits to growth" socialism). This bulletin remains open to participation from readers who identify with this political sector. Subscriptions are \$3/year (6 issues).



FIFTH ESTATE

#356/Spring through #358/Fall 2002 (4632 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48201) is now a 32 to 56-page semi-primitivist magazine with a new editorial collective in Tennessee. The Summer issue features Julie Herrada's first-person account of her visit to Israel and the occupied territories, Peter Lamborn Wilson's fascinating "My Summer Vacation in Afghanistan" (an account of a trip in 1968-9), an explanation by Alix Kates Shulman in "Dances with Feminists" about where the fake but ubiquitous Emma Goldman quotes (there are

many variants) about dancing and revolution originated, and an amazingly naive piece by Peter Lippman titled "While Yugoslavia Burned the Left Looked the Other Way" (arguing that the New World Empire didn't ever do anything to intentionally destabilize Yugoslavia and fantasizing that leftists like Noam Chomsky who steadfastly opposed the US/NATO bombings and other military interventions were somehow "looking the other way"!). The Fall issue features a defense of moralistic pacifism (illogically characterizing violence as always "authoritarian") in "Instead of a Primer," while coincidentally including David Watson's long, boring attack on **Alternative Press Review** for having the temerity to consistently oppose the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia (which he thinks wasn't such a bad idea) and for publishing an excerpt from Slobodan Milosevic's statement to the NATO victor's court in the Hague without asking Watson's permission. The pathetic diatribe ends by condemning "the entire Western intervention in the Balkans" as "too little and disastrously too late." (Should NATO have bombed more people and sooner?) Sad but true. Single copies are now \$3; subscriptions are now \$10/4 issues.

FREEDOM

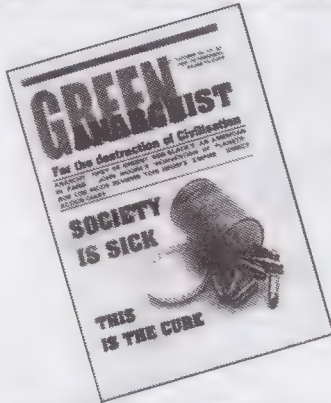
Anarchist Fortnightly

Vol.63, #7/April 5 through Vol.63, #17/Sept. 7, 2002 (84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England; web site: www.ecn.org/freedom) is a long-running 8-page tabloid of anarchist news and comment covering international, as well as British, social struggles. The May 18th issue covers anarchist events throughout Britain on May 1st, while the June 15th issue includes coverage of the pre-emptive arrests of everyone who showed up for the Movement Against the Monarchy's "Execute the Queen" street party—before it even began! The June 29th issue has a half-hearted & unconvincing defense of anti-porn, authoritarian feminist Andrea Dworkin titled "Pornography and DIY." Recent issues include an ongoing section of the newspaper reassessing where it is and where it should be going. North American subscriptions are still £22/year (24 issues).

GREEN ANARCHIST

For the destruction of Civilization

#66/Spring & #67/Autumn 2002 (BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX, England; or POB 11331, Eugene, OR 97440, USA) is an interesting



16 to 20-page eco-anarchist, anti-civilization tabloid with a big emphasis on direct actions. The Spring issue features a simplistic critique of corporate globalization—along with its opposition—titled "No Globalization...and a good few 'no's when it comes to anti-globalization too!" It also includes John Connor's interesting analysis of last year's May Day protests, a critique of Ya Basta! titled "Beware of White-Dressed Cops," and a point/counterpoint page in which John Zerzan disses *Willful Disobedience* and Justin Stephens responds in its defense. The Autumn issue includes a nasty cover with the lines, "Society is Sick" and "This is the Cure," accompanied by a number of bullets, along with articles including "An American in Paris" (the story of Murray Bookchin's pseudo-activity in Paris '68), a couple takes on Hardt & Negri's *Empire*, and a critical review of Crimethink's *Days of War, Nights of Love*. This zine remains well worth the price with sample copies \$3 or £1.50, and subscriptions \$15 or £5/5 issues.

KSL

Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library

#28/Oct. 2001 through #30/May 2002 (KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX, England) is an 8-page newsletter "dedicated to countering the distortion and lies that pass for the history Anarchism" in order to "give the anarchist movement a true view of its origins." The October issue features an excellent response from Emiliano Zapata to the trite wisdom that "violence breeds violence" under the title of "Whose Violence?" The May issue includes an interesting "Open Letter to Luis Puenzo" from América Scarfó critical of his script for a movie about Severino Di Giovanni, along with a short essay tying up some of the loose historical ends of the Di Giovanni "affair." There's solid historical information in each issue. Send a contribution for a sample copy.

LA MAUVAISE HERBE

#1-#3 (Montreal, Canada; e-mail: mauvaiseherbe@altern.org) literally Weeds (or Bad Weeds), is Montreal's newest and most interesting anarchist publication. The zine is somewhat eclectic but is influenced in part by green anarchist and anti-civilization outlooks. Issues contain articles about local and international events, translations and theory, as well as drawings, collages and poetry. Articles in issue #3 include an anarcho-feminist critique of Marxist feminism, an article about a local anti-police-brutality demo, an article entitled "Domestication as a Form of Domination," a piece on refugees in Australia and a vegetarian critique of how poultry are raised. Issue #4 contains a translation of an editorial critiquing platformism by Jason McQuinn. It is worth pointing out that local NEFAC members attempted to bar *La Mauvaise Herbe* from participating in a local radical umbrella group. Issue #4 also contains a long review of Fredy Perlman's classic *Against History, Against Leviathan!*, a short piece on different bio-centric currents, an article on affinity groups and a piece on biotechnology. The publication presently has no street address but can be reached at: mauvaiseherbe@altern.org (MW)

NORTHEASTERN ANARCHIST

#5/Fall-Winter 2002 (c/o Sabate Anarchist Collective [NEFAC], POB 230685, Boston, MA 02123) is the 40-page semi-platformist "Magazine of Anarcho-Communists" [NEFAC], featuring interviews by Duke with several NEFAC members who are also reformist union organizers, an account by Chekov Feeney (of the Irish Workers Solidarity Movement) of his recent NEFAC speaking tour, a hectoring critique of "The Anti-G8 Protests in Calgary" by Tom Keefer, a ridiculous rant by Brian Sheppard on "Anarchism and the Labor Movement" (in which he naively claims that "The problem with American organized labor is its leadership"—if only there were some anarchist leaders in the AFL-CIO and Teamsters they'd be revolutionary?!), and Aileen O'Carroll's account of the Bolshevik destruction of the Russian Revolution (in which he ignores the effects of authoritarian ideology and organization and concludes that they voluntarily "could have followed a more democratic route, but they chose not to"!); Jeff Shantz has a couple pieces in this issue, including "Radical Ecology

and Class Struggle: A Re-Consideration." Unfortunately, though, much of this issue seems oriented primarily towards pushing anarchists toward dead-end involvement in reformist left organizing. The cover price is \$4; subscriptions are \$15/4 issues.

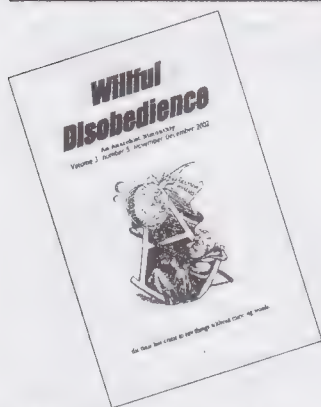
NOT BORED!

#34/July 2002 (POB 1115, New York, NY 10009; web site: www.notbored.org) remains an often stimulating and interesting, 36-page pro-situationist zine. This issue opens with a description of the publisher's original reactions to the attack on the World Trade Center last year—"amazed and impressed" (though he seems to think that others who were "shocked" by the attack weren't also "amazed and impressed"—let's face it, most anti-capitalists were quite happy to see the World Trade Center building erased from the skyline of New York; it was the loss of relatively innocent [working class] lives that was appalling). Also in this issue is "Smoke Screens" (denouncing Bush's insane "War on [non-U.S.-sponsored] Terrorism"), and "A New Garden of Eden" (proposing that Adam Purple rebuild his "Garden of Eden" at "ground zero" as a fitting replacement of the hideous World Trade Center towers! No price; send a contribution. "No trades, subscriptions or advertising."

SOCIAL ANARCHISM

A Journal of Theory and Practice

#32/2002 (Atlantic Center for Research and Education, 2473 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218; web site: www.nothingness.org/sociala/; e-mail: sociala@nothingness.org) is a 96-page annual journal with something of an academic orientation (contributors are most often faculty or students). Issue #32 features somewhat conflicting accounts of last winter's World Social Forum conference in Brazil by Bookchinite Cindy Milstein (who is wisely critical of the reformism inherent in the organization of the WSF) and Jason Adams (who articulates a naive faith that there is room for genuine anti-capitalists within the WSF). Also included is Howard Ehrlich's relatively uncontroversial assessment of the first six months of the War against Terrorism, titled "No Way to Peace," and an important account of Wobblly Volunteers in the 1911 "Magonista Revolt in Baja California" by Lawrence Taylor. Single copy \$5.00; subscriptions \$16/4 issues or \$25/4 issues (overseas).

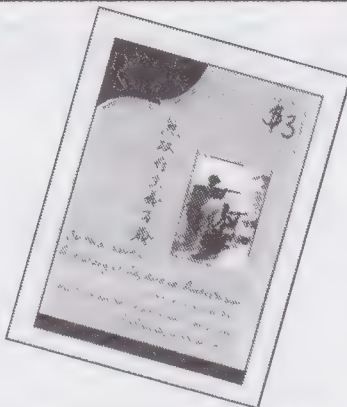


WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE An Anarchist Bimonthly

Vol.3, #3/July-Aug. through #5/Nov.-Dec. 2002 (Venomous Butterfly Publications, POB 31098, Los Angeles, CA 90031; web site: www.vbpubs.com) is an ambitious, bimonthly zine of unapologetic rebellion aiming at amoral, anarchic insurrection, with a new 32-page, zine-size format starting with the latest issue. The July-August issue includes "Prisoners of a single world" by Gruppo Anarchico Insurrezionalista "E. Malatesta," "Revolt without membership cards," and a piece on the Edelweiss Pirates' "Eternal War on the Hitler Youth." The September-October issue includes "Religion: When the sacred imprisons the marvelous," and "A few words: On the aims and methods of Critique." The November-December issue includes "A few words: On being who we say we are" ("Perhaps the most basic anarchist principle...is the recognition that freedom can only be realized in *freedom*,..."), "Where to now? Some thoughts on the uprising in Argentina," a critique of the family titled "A family affair," and "Some notes on Marxist analysis: For discussion and debate toward the development of a deeper anarchist social analysis" (critical of the reified nature of much of Marxist theory, in which real human actions and relationships are lost to view). This is one of the more consistently intelligent anarchist voices currently publishing, one of my absolute favorites. Highly recommended. Sample copies are \$1 each, while subscriptions are \$5/6 issues.

YE DRUNKEN SAILOR Anarchist Communist Attack, Theory and Tactics

Vol.1, #4/Oct. 2002 (Box 116, 339a College St, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1S2, Canada; web site: www.tao.ca/freyhey) is the attractive (nice color covers), readable, 32-page magazine of the Freyhey Collective. This issue starts out with a surprising description of "Anarcho-Hypocrisy: Freyhey's Expulsion



from NEFAC" (it's unfortunate that NEFAC couldn't have done a better job dealing with this), an amusing interview with Bruce Allen (I'll always remember his complaint at a SRAF conference in Fayetteville, Arkansas that "I didn't come 1,000 miles to go swimming"!), and a brief account of some major aspects of the history of Japanese anarchism from 1900 to 1945 by Luca, titled "Museifu Shugi Banzai." The cover price is \$3; subscriptions are \$12/4 issues.

Non-English-language materials received

Keep in mind that the new European currency is now being used; some of these periodicals came in before the imposition of the Euro so prices may have changed.

CANARIAH

#11/Feb. 2002 through #13/May 2002 (Gruppo Malatesta, Via Di Campani 69, 00185 - Roma, Italy) is the 8 to 12-page Italian-language anarchist paper published by the Gruppo Anarchico Malatesta in Rome. Issue #11 includes "But Is the Revolution Still Possible?"; "A Death Can Be Accidental. A Life of Compromise Is Banal," an account of an escape from the autobiographical writings of Horst Fantazzini, the Italian anarchist who died after a severe beating by cops in prison last December; and excerpts from "The Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists" by the Dielo Trouda group and Malatesta's original critique of the "Platform." Issue #12 includes "The Organizational Question" consisting of Makhno's response to Malatesta's critique and Malatesta's response to Makhno; "A Few Words About Primitivism" by Antonio Masia; and "Democracy and 'Big Brother': the Unbreakable Terrorist Binomial" chronicling state repression throughout Italy. Issue #13 includes "The Faces of Domination" by Alfredo Salerni and "The State and Palestine" by Toto

Sceicco. The paper also generally includes reviews of anarchist web sites, contact information for other publications and information on various anarchist projects. Though it is free, I recommend that people from overseas send something to help with postage. [WL]

COMUNARDA

Vol.3, #3/Guigno 2002 (c/o F.A. G Pinelli, CP 7, 87019 Spezzano Albanese [CS], Italy) is a 12-page, Italian-language tabloid, including an anti-GMO piece, something on the notorious Italo-Argentine anarchist Severino De Giovanni & his lover Josefina Scarfó, and an interview with Peter Phillips from Project Censored. Single copies are 2,000 lire; subscriptions are 8,000 lire (4 issues).

CONTACT

#2/(?) & #3/December 2001 (Pavlos Karanatsis, Poukevil 3, 262 23 Patras, Greece; web site: www.geocities.com/contact_agrinio) is a nicely-done, new 76 to 84-page Greek-language anarchist magazine. However, since no one here can read Greek the contents are unknown. The cover price is 1,000 drachmas or 2.93 Euros.

CNT

Organ of the National Confederation of Labor

#281/July-August 2002 (Box 4040, 18080 Granada, Spain) A cover article on the spectacular (in the situationist sense) nature of soccer, Spanish workplace deaths (298 in the first three months of 2002), general labor news. Plus a poem in memory of Carlo Giuliani. 1.21 Euros. In Spanish. [LJ]

EKINTZA ZUZENA

#29/Spring-Summer 2002 (Ediciones E.Z., Apdo. 235, 48080 Bilbao Bizkaia/Spain) A lead article on the current situation in Euzkara (the Basque country) with the tensions between the Spanish government, ETA, and anarchists. Several essays on immigrants to Spain (primarily from North Africa, an essay called "Contributions of Police Systems Toward the Institutionalization of Insecurity" (with a great photo of a cop in full riot gear and gas mask about to smash the photographer with a club), a long article on drug consumption and distribution, and animal experimentation. Plus a pamphlet on Argentina. In Spanish and Euskara (Basque). 3.5 Euros; subscriptions \$30. [LJ]

LE LIBERTAIRE

Revue de synthèse anarchiste
#223/Mars & #224/Avril 2002

(Boîte postale 745, 76060 Le Havre, France; web site: <http://le-libertaire.org>) remains a 4-page French-language tabloid of "anarchist synthesis," claiming to continue the tradition of Joseph Dejacques and Sébastien Faure. The cover price is 1.5 Euros; international subscriptions are 16.5E/10 issues.

OBRERO PRISIONERO

Counterinformation periodical for anarchist prisoners

#6/May-June 2002 (Cruz Negra Anarquista/Peninsula Iberica, Apdo. 5 de Getafe, 28901 Madrid, Spain) Lots of short write-ups of various anarchist prisoners in Spain and around the world (including a petition to send to Congress concerning Leonard Peltier). An article on the privatization of American prisons and a critique of Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay. In Spanish. .60 Euros. [LJ]

PAGINE IN RIVOLTA

#14/Jan. 2002 (Pagina in Rivolta, C.P. 1254, 10100 Torino, Italy) is an Italian-language revolutionary anarchist periodical with a strong emphasis on anarchist prisoners and prison struggles. This issue includes "Nationality or Globalization?" an analysis of the Sardinian independence movement; "The Unsupportable Anarchism," a history of insurrectional anarchism in early 20th century Russia; and an interview with anarchist prisoner, Marco Camenisch. The cover price is 2000 lire or 1 euro per issue—or send at least \$2 US to cover costs. [WL]

SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA

Organ of the Regional Confederation of Labor in Catalonia

#311/July-August 2002 (Hospital 101, 08001 Barcelona, Spain) An editorial on the situation of international anarchism in the 32 months since Seattle, articles on the ongoing repression in Argentina and Peru, and reviews of new books on Cuban anarchism and the Iron Column. In Spanish (with a column in Catalan). 1 Euro. [LJ]

SU GAZETINU

de sa luta kontras a sas presones

#6/Marzo-Aprile through #8/Sept.-Oct. 2002 (c/o Cavalleri, via M Melas 24, 09040 Guasila (CA), Italy) is a 12-page Italian-language (partially in Sardinian dialect as well), insurrectionist anarchist periodical for "the struggle against prisons." The cover price is now 1 euro.

Montreal Cops Crack Down On Demos

by Michael William

In the last few years, mass arrests have become regular events at local demos. Then, this spring, the repression was ratcheted up further when participants at an anti-globalization demo were encircled by riot police before it got underway and all those caught in the net were either detained and later released, were given tickets, or were arrested and spent the night in jail.

The police action has sent shock waves through the radical milieu and is causing people to wonder what the future of demos will be...or whether they even have a future.

The occasion for the demo was a get-together in Montreal of the labour ministers of the G8 countries. The demo was organized by CLAC (Anti-Capitalist Convergence), Montreal's most radical anti-globalization group. Many members of the relatively large group are anarchists. CLAC was formed in part as a split-off from another group called Sa/AMI. Sa/AMI advocates non-violent civil disobedience and denounces black blocs and window-smashing. CLAC supports a "diversity of tactics" approach. At Quebec City, CLAC organized the demos at which the black bloc and other people tore down parts of the security fence.

The gathering point for the anti labour ministers demo was a block-long park in the downtown core. When I arrived, fairly early, people were standing around in small groups talking. Plentiful free food was laid out and I helped myself.

More people showed up—students, punks, leftists, radicals—the usual anti-globalization mix. A little off to one side, members of a local Maoist group had gathered around a banner. Most held red flags and some more than one, presumably to create as impressive a splash of colour as possible. In a box was a pile of crimson bandanna masks with yellow hammers and sickles on them that the Maoists sometimes use at demos. A Maoist with long grey hair who was at least 20 yards away brandished a copy of the group's free tabloid at me when he noticed I was looking in his direction. I ignored him.

Eventually, animation and speeches took place. As the demo was about to get underway, I walked towards where I had parked my bike. I then realized that a cordon of riot cops had formed across one side of the park. I hesitated, wondering whether I had time to get the bike. Bikes can be invaluable for a quick getaway. The line of cops remained motionless and I decided to get my bike. I returned to the crowd of demonstrators which had now grown to several hundred. As people moved slowly in the oppo-

site direction from the cops I became aware that, blocking the street in the way we were going, another line of cops had formed. A third line blocked another potential way out.

The crowd moved towards the cops. I was feeling angry that they had tried to shut down the demo before it even started. Others, I sensed, were equally upset. However, were people willing to storm the row of cops to attempt to break out of the encirclement?

The crowd arrived near the cops. I suddenly realized that, with my hands on the handlebars, I would be unable to shield myself if a cop attempted to brain me with his baton. I scrambled back, bumping into people behind me, maneuvered around a parked car, and headed toward the sidewalk. I thought that if a clash occurred, I might be able to zip through along the side of the building in the melee. Now in my fifties, I'm a bit old to physically confront the cops.

Pushing and shoving and exchanges of blows took place but it soon became clear that the wherewithal was lacking to force our way through. Another line of cops formed behind the one we were facing, making hope of escaping in that direction out of the question.

A group of demonstrators decided to sit



Poster for the March 15 demo.

down. The rest milled around. Lines of cops would move slowly towards us and then pause. I checked out potential escape routes. All were blocked. I locked my bike, which was now an encumbrance, to a pole.

One way out seemed to remain: a number of stores across the street. I entered a restaurant that was filled with demonstrators and walked to the back. A man in a suit—a manager or a cop—who was blocking the door told me that people would only be getting out the way they got in—through the front door. Going by the determined look on the faces of a group of people at the back, I sensed that they were about to make a move. Sure enough, someone announced that we would now exit through the back. We headed toward the manager. He decided not to try to block us. We burst through the back door...and right into a row of cop cars in the parking lot. The cars, though, were empty. On the far side of the lot a lone cop on a motorcycle made no attempt to stop us.

I walked half a block to Sainte-Catherine, Montreal's principal downtown commercial street, turned and headed back toward where I could see what had happened at the demo. A couple of dozen demonstrators who had also broken out of the encirclement were present. Some were taunting the cops.

Pedestrians streamed down Sainte-Catherine. I moved along further and circled around to where I had a better view. The cops had now closed in around the demonstrators who had not managed to escape. I met a couple of people I knew who had just arrived and explained what had happened.

More demonstrators were now on Sainte-Catherine. A man was attempting to block the street with an object (a trash can if I remember correctly). Someone said the cops were coming from behind us. I decided to leave: having broken out of one encirclement, I didn't want to get caught in another. Ultimately this second encirclement didn't take place.

Back at home I turned on the news. A police spokesperson justified the detentions (140 ticketed and 25 arrested) by evoking a little-known municipal by-law which permits preventive arrests at demos if three criteria are met: the people behind the demo have a history of organizing violent demos; there must be reason to believe that violence will take place at the demo in question (the police cited graffiti calling for a riot on the day of the demo); and objects which can be construed as weapons have to be present.

At a police press conference objects were displayed that were said have been confis-



Police surround demonstrators at the April 26 demo.

cated. Interestingly, after the demo the cops had been filmed rooting around in garbage cans in the vicinity of the arrests, putting into question whether the objects displayed were in effect taken from people. It is very easy in any case in these situations for the police to stick anything they want on the table. As well, some objects, such as gas masks and water bottles, could not be construed as offensive weapons.

One confiscated item mentioned by the police was a 9-mm pistol. However, the presence of such a weapon was unlikely said a statement by a group of lawyers who defend political cases. Guns or knives have never been found on anyone arrested at a Quebec antiglobalization demo, they pointed out. In a letter to the editor of a Montreal alternative weekly, a member of a local anti-police-brutality group speculated that a weapon (it turned out to be 35-mm, not 9-mm) was in fact confiscated that day—but not from someone involved with the demo. The following week an article appeared in the same paper by a journalist who had investigated the issue. The person arrested, it turned out, had a history of gang-related activities; he had no connection to the demo, his lawyer said.

The March 15 Demo

Montreal's most potentially explosive annual demo, on March 15, targets police brutality. The event is organized by the Collective Opposed to Police Brutality (COBP).

On March 15, 2000, windows were smashed at a police station, a bank and three McDonald's restaurants. The police then encircled and arrested those still present.

In a speech before the demo of 2001 got underway, a COBP spokesperson stated that because of the arrests at the previous demo, it was imperative that no arrests take place. Although I could appreciate his protectiveness vis-a-vis the demonstrators, I felt this put enormous pressure on anyone who *did* do something illegal. Ultimately, the demo was noisy but calm.

As I arrived for the 2002 demo, freezing rain was lightly falling. I locked my bike, opened an umbrella, and attempted to sell periodicals I bring to demos.

Speeches took place and the demo got underway. By now the crowd had swelled to 500. The demo headed half a dozen blocks to police headquarters where a speech was

given by a COBP spokesperson. By this time the freezing rain had stopped. A lone police car in front of headquarters was spray painted. The sound of headquarters windows breaking could be heard, although by this time it was hard to see because it was getting dark. The damage was fairly minor—a several inch wide hole in one pane.

The demo moved on, wound through Montreal's small Chinatown and stopped in front of the provincial courthouse. Another speech was given by a COBP spokesperson, followed by an open mike.

Suddenly riot cops appeared half a block from the demo. I began to move away but cops were converging from two other directions. The only way out was through a parking lot. I biked as quickly as possible and others were running just behind me. Walls on two sides of the parking lot obliged us to funnel toward one corner where a cop car was present. No cops got out and we were able to escape.

I circled back to where the cops had surrounded the demonstrators. It was difficult to get close and see how many people had been caught. It turned out to be most of those present—371 people.



Poster for the public assembly preceding the Ottawa demo.

Debate

Considerable analysis of the demo has taken place and debate about how it was organized. In my opinion, following the incident at headquarters, it would have been better to keep the demo moving instead of stopping for more speeches. Although spotters with cell phones were present, demonstrators received no warning that riot cops were about to charge. As well, following the incident at headquarters a dispersal order had been given by the police. I and most demonstrators did not hear the original notice when it was given. People present had relayed it to the COBP sound truck, but it was not relayed to the rest of us, leaving us little time to decide how to react.

Commentaries on the demo appeared in the local French language anarchist press and on the Internet. An article entitled "A Bitter March 15" was published in Montreal's newest anarchist journal, *La Mauvaise Herbe*. The article noted that the annual demo has become an important part of radical culture. It is a "demonstration of force". It is also an important event for the cops, the article continued, because they don't wish to get blamed if the kind of trashing occurs that took place in 2000.

The mass arrests probably were premeditated said the author, mentioning the large number of undercovers and increased surveillance. The police succeeded in carrying out the encirclement swiftly and effectively.

The author was unhappy that a speech was given in front of the courthouse: few people were in the area at the time and the presence of a hill gave the cops the advantage of being on higher ground. "An efficient demo is one that is mobile and intelligent," he argued.

Do anti-riot squad lines need to be formed, he wondered, suggesting the use of mattresses and large tires. These, however, it seems to me, are not exactly easy to transport during a demo. And concerning another suggestion, it is hard to see how a group of people at the front of the demo holding "big black flags" would be a serious deterrent to the police. These issues need further reflection.

A article on the demo by Bête Noire, a member group of NEFAC (North East Federation of Anarcho-Communists), appeared in another Montreal anarchist journal, *Le Trouble*. A reply to the article was penned by COBP member "Maurice Boubouev."

Like others, Bête Noire complained that the speech at the courthouse was in an area that was deserted at the time and that the dispersal order was not communicated by COBP to demo participants.

Bête Noire said that the event should become larger than just the demo: "Activities of all kinds should take place throughout the week of March 15th; educational events, political debates, cultural and sporting activities are all viable options that could attract larger segments of working class people to our struggle...The protest itself should be much larger and above all more diversified."

Boubouev countered that a conference and a musical event were in fact organized, and that an attendance of 500 at the demo was "respectable." Seventeen members of Kabataang, a communist-oriented Philippine youth group, was also a reasonable turnout, he said. (Bête Noire had complained that there were not many people from this group).

For my part, I have trouble understanding why Kabataang was invited to speak at the demo: Don't they want to set up a Marxist police state where anarchists as usual would be among the first to be suppressed? There are surely other immigrant groups which could have been invited to speak.

Bête Noire also critiqued the demo's location, saying it should have been held in a working-class area instead of downtown. This would also have made it difficult to make mass arrests, they said.

Boubouev replied that mass arrests have in fact taken place in the specific neighbourhood mentioned by Bête Noire. The cops are more than willing to make mass arrests anywhere as long as it's tactically feasible, he said.

In my opinion, however, there are other aspects to be taken into account. Although



Poster for the April 26 demo.

many working-class people dislike the cops, many others support them: in a choice between the police and the punks, street people, and radicals at the demo, a lot would choose the cops. For example, in the most recent Ontario elections, fiscal and social conservatives teamed up with factory workers and bus drivers to elect the Conservative Party on a law and order platform.

As well, many working-class people have little contact with the police, unless it's a matter of something like speeding tickets. Their oppression takes place on a different level (bosses, politicians, etc.) It is precisely the kind of people who show up at the demo who experience police abuse on a regular basis.

Bête Noire also brought up the question of street-fighting elements at the demo. "How come for months in Montreal, black bloc types have been carrying rocks, marbles and molotov cocktails on them at many demonstrations without ever using them?" In any case, Bête Noire said, as opposed to concentrating on street confrontation the goal of the event should be to "establish a moment during the year where a large amount of people who are fed up with the cops could unite and empower themselves in the face of this repressive plague that we live with every day throughout the year...We don't need two times more rocks and bottles, but surely two times more people!"

Boubouev stated caustically that these street fighters are more myth than reality and that little conflict with the cops actually takes

place. Talk of conflict was "bullshit" from "tavern warriors" who "spend their time telling themselves there's going to be a riot, that they're going to smash the cops' faces; they amuse themselves taking their dreams for reality but when it comes time to bloody the cops they fall all over themselves trying to flee—as you as well as I know."

The May 1 Demo

Shortly after I arrived at the rallying point for this year's May Day demo, I was told by an acquaintance that the police had attempted to get the union organizers of the demo to ban radicals. Would the cops attempt more "preventive" arrests, I wondered.

A police higher-up passed through the growing crowd. I later spotted him lurking in a doorway talking on a cell phone.

No police intervention took place and a large anarchist contingent was loud but non-confrontational. I later interviewed a union spokesperson about the cops' attempt to ban radicals. He said the police had asked them to ban CLAC. The union spokesperson told me that the police had been told it was not up to the cops to decide who participates in the demo.

Calgary and Ottawa

Following the Genoa summit, it was Canada's turn in 2002 to host the annual G8 summit. To make the event as protest-proof as possible, the Canadian authorities decided to hold the meeting in a tiny Alberta resort town. Unable to access the location, antiglobalization protestors held demos in Calgary, Alberta, and in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada's capital. Attendance was much smaller than at Genoa or Quebec City.

Prior to the summit, mainstream media editorialists conducted a by now familiar fear campaign. Police spokespeople and politicians lashed out at potential troublemakers, issuing blunt threats.

In Ottawa on the first day of the summit, a Take the Capital event was organized by a coalition of several dozen groups. On the second day an immigrant-related No One is Illegal demo took place. Both demos were organized on a diversity of tactics basis, although the demo on the second day was asked to be non-confrontational.

During these two days CLAC vehicles were followed constantly and the CLAC van was stopped and ID'ed five times. As people unloaded banners at the demo starting point, the van was searched by four cops.

Next the cops attempted to arrest a man who was then unarrested by demonstrators. The police subsequently succeeded in arresting a CLAC member.

At this point the about 4000-strong demo got underway. Numerous undercovers were present as well as cops on bikes and

rollerblades. The demo took the form of a snake march. As it visited different government buildings, graffiti were at times sprayed by a 30-40 member black bloc. No trashing took place.

The main action during the demo was the opening of a squat. Some demonstrators



Surrounded demonstrators on April 26.

Events in Montreal have been a reminder of the fragility of the so-called right to demonstrate. For anarchists, it is not a question of asserting a "right" accorded by the state, but of taking back the streets.

stayed on to protect the squat. The building was held for a week at which point a large police operation evicted the squatters.

In Calgary, a demo composed of about a thousand union members and radicals marched around the city until some of the more moderate elements fell out to picnic in the park or to listen to music by Canadian leftist Bruce Cockburn. About 300 people continued on until they arrived in front of a McDonald's which was protected by a cordon of cops. Some of the demonstrators pleaded with black bloc types not to attack the restaurant. Ultimately no confrontation took place and the demo dispersed shortly after.

Conclusion

Events in Montreal have been a reminder of the fragility of the so-called right to demonstrate. For anarchists, it is not a question of asserting a "right" accorded by the state, but of *taking back the streets*.

At the same time it is clear that, if the usual police crowd control methods are deemed insufficient, Western states will simply revoke the right to demonstrate if

tensions mount and they feel threatened. For example, demos were banned in Montreal for a period during the sixties, although the leftist or radical nationalist forces of that era posed no serious insurrectionary threat to the state. Similarly, although acts of Islamic-inspired terrorism have been rare in the U.S., the current hysterical War on Terrorism has been quick to adopt the methods of classical Stalinism: indefinite detention without access to a lawyer; the unwillingness of the state to identify those arrested (disappearances); the withholding of evidence against the (non) accused, etc. Because anarchists are by definition not backed by a state, we fit the profile of "unlawful combatants" as defined by the War on Terrorism.

Locally, the suppression of recent demos has brought to the forefront the question of the role and importance of demos for radicals. Should we abandon them or greatly downgrade them as a priority, or, on the contrary, should we insist on being in the streets when we deem it appropriate?

According to one outlook too much energy has been expended on antiglobalization demos. From this viewpoint Ottawa and Calgary demonstrate the decline of this movement; to the extent that the fuzzy antiglobalization movement has been of use to anarchists, this use has come to an end. Instead of summit hopping, anarchists should be organizing strong local projects and affinity groups, creating theory or doing clandestine actions, etc.

Another aspect is the ease with which mass arrests have been carried out by the police. They have the tactical advantage whereas we are weak and unprepared. In addition, many radicals have now been arrested at several demos, burdening them with antecedents or bail conditions. It is well known that part of police strategy is to tie people up in the courts with bogus charges such as illegal assembly or mischief.

And it should be mentioned that many demos are boring and predictable. To make matters worse, demo organizers are frequently control freaks. These people need to understand that demos belong to those who participate in them, not just the organizers.

At their best, on the other hand, demos can be exhilarating. At Quebec City, people were able to create cop-free zones, an exquisite if rare experience. It is true, though, that at Quebec City the police were in a defensive mode geared toward protecting the security fence.

Demos are also as much a social occasion as a protest, a place to meet friends and comrades, to exchange flyers and info.

My own opinion, as might be surmised, is ambivalent. I go to a lot of demos and wish to continue. However, much remains to be done to make them more secure, and, just as important, more enjoyable.

Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives

Statement of the new Great Lakes and Midwest Federation

The Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives (FRAC) is a revolutionary anarchist federation in the Great Lakes and Midwest region of North America. The FRAC was officially founded in June of 2002 through an over year-long effort by numerous anarchists and anarchist collectives in the region which wanted to take the theory and practice of anarchism to a new level for the 21st century. Inspired by increasing levels of resistance to oppression and domination around the world, the FRAC came together in the spirit of forging a new path for revolutionary anarchists through blending fresh theory, practice, and organization.

Amidst the smoke and haze of the United States' "War on Terrorism," increasing police brutality and murder, failing schools and hospitals, and more we know that another world is possible. Our goal is to build an organization based on revolutionary anarchist politics that can help spark the flame of collective rebellion that will one day lead to a world worth living in for everyone.

What's up in 2002?

The world is getting hot. It seems like every time you read the news someone around the globe is getting bombed, having their land stolen, being forced to work insanely long hours for little pay, or being degraded and oppressed. The US's "War on Terrorism" is promising to take more lives while trampling our so-called rights more and more at home. Right-wing politicians and fascist movements from the U.S. to France to Afghanistan are attacking women for taking control of their lives and bodies. Cops are jacking people left and right, especially youth of color. And those who stand up to their brutality often face just as harsh treatment. Globalization allows corporations to swallow up entire groups of people and give them the choice of backbreaking labor and poverty or starvation and disease.

But resistance to all this is growing. People all over the world are refusing to take all this oppression sitting down and just accept the ruling class and it's entire order without a fight. Much of this resistance has taken on an anti-authoritarian character in ways that have inspired revolutionary anarchists throughout the world. In the Midwest/Great Lakes region things are no different; revolutionary anarchists want to be a part of this growing struggle for freedom. This is where the creation of the Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives comes in.

Revolutionary anarchism works towards building a new world, one free of unneces-

sary hierarchies and domination that create systems of oppression and exploitation by one group of people over another. We see the existence of capitalism, patriarchy, the nation-state, and racism/white supremacy as being an intense combination of forms of domination that all interlock as part of modern society. We hold that turning the world around will take a social revolution of a size and intensity never seen before on the face of the planet. This transformation will have to be based on an understanding of the world we live in and its complex web of exploitation and repression, a vision of the future the people of the world actually want to live in, and a plan to help us get there. The Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives aims to be part of this social revolution by developing and acting on our revolutionary anarchist perspective in the Midwest, North America, and ultimately the world.

Our Politics

The Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives is dedicated to revolutionary class struggle against the system of patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, and the state. We believe that revolution is necessary and must be based among the working class and oppressed communities with the anarchist goal of a decentralized, non-hierarchical society, self-organized into federated neighborhood, workplace, and cultural committees energized with a spirit of egalitarianism, direct democracy, experimentation, and mutual aid.

We are against capitalism because it is based on inequality, alienation and theft and does not provide the majority of world's population with the basic necessities of life. We intend to replace it with mutual aid and a cooperative, bottom-up, and democratic form of communism where those who work control the means of production. We go by the maxim: To each according to their need, from each according to their ability.

We consider ourselves Internationalists. We support self-determination and cultural autonomy for oppressed people. We are against the system of white supremacy which seeks to maintain a cross class alliance between white workers and the North American ruling class. We seek the destruction of all forms of racism, imperialism, and reactionary nationalism. We are inspired by multi-ethnic organizing against white supremacy, and believe that it is the foundation towards its destruction.

We want queer liberation. We are against heterosexism, homophobia and the simplicity of the dual gender system. We are for the

liberation of lesbian, transgendered, gay, bi and all queer people. We embrace the full spectrum of consensual human sexuality and celebrate a diversity of family forms. We want to liberate desire from the binds of religious bigotry and patriarchal social conditioning.

To hook up with a FRAC collective contact:

Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives (FRAC)
PO BOX 4502
East Lansing, MI 48826-4502
nightvision@ziplip.com

Member Collectives of FRAC

Black Heart Anarchist Collective
Columbus, OH

Burning River Collective
PO BOX 27376
Cleveland, OH 44127-0376
216-732-3337 Voice Mail
brc@burningriver.org
www.burningriver.org

YUCC (Yet Unnamed Chicago Collective)
Chicago, IL

Nightvision
PO BOX 4502
East Lansing, MI 48826-4502
nightvision@ziplip.com

Freedom for anarchist Giorgos Karakasian

Today, 27th August 2002, anarchist comrade Giorgos Karakasian made his third appearance in court following a demo outside the Israeli embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus on April 18, 2002 (on the occasion of a celebration of the anniversary of the foundation of the state of Israel), where scuffles broke out between demonstrators and the police who were protecting the entry of guests to the assassins' banquet. The charge against Karakasian is "beating a cop" (who happened to be the second in command for the whole of Cyprus) and causing damage to the car of one of the guests. It was already clear that this was to be no ordinary trial. Giorgos received his summons only sixteen hours before the first hearing, at which he was

Call for a Meeting of People against Civilization

Preliminary date and place: Barcelona, April/May 2003

Llavor d'anarquia has been created as a discussion group aiming at developing a public debate on a series of topics. Our immediate concern is, however, the "inevitable" need that we feel, to find a way to respond to actions of authority. At the same time as we were promoting our discursive project at the Prague summit, in the field of guaranteed basic income, in front of the World Bank, at the European summit in Barcelona, in Johannesburg, we maintained the debate among ourselves.

Through our debate on the crisis of anarchism in the Spanish State (and Europe), we have reached some small "discovery": Our position in *criticizing civilization*, or, rather, in *anti-civilization*. This was a contribution that made things much clearer for us (the constant mistake of adhering to reformism, authoritarian practices, the impossibility of formulating alternatives inside the system), and helped us reconnect to the origins of anarchism, as anarchism had been a radical form of anti-civilization until it became "realistic".

What we'd like to do now is to suspend for a while our "anti" activities (a relative suspension, as the forthcoming struggle doesn't allow us to keep silent) and to reassume debate and open discussion. We'd like to have more people joining us with this discussion, people that we know either directly or indirectly, people that we don't know at all, people that we'd like to meet. *That's why we*

wish to call for a meeting of people that oppose state, authority, capitalism, but, above all, oppose civilization. We believe that being against civilization means being against many other things as well.

It's not going to be a congress, nor a symposium, nor some kind of an assembly. We neither wish to arrive at definitive conclusions, nor to formulate ready-made projects, or to establish organizations. We wouldn't like it even to be a reunion of activist groups (though, the presence of such groups will be welcome).

WHAT DO WE WANT TO HAVE?

- A reunion of people around the axis of the struggle against civilization. The civilization that oppresses us, destroys humanity, nature and the whole planet we live in.

- A reunion of people that give priority to how to get organized. For us it's more important to establish relationships, to get to know each other, understand each other, contrast our positions. We think one of our priorities in the field of anarchism should be friendship and affection between ourselves.

- We will also accept, of course, interchange of experiences, agreement on activities, and, why not, performing a common line, shared activities, similar messages that do happen to coincide at a certain point.

- We'd like to create a space for relationships that are lasting, that go much farther than what happens at the meeting itself, even if we don't wish to create committees, a federation or anything similar. Perhaps a series of meetings (of many people, of fewer, of individuals) and/or further contact, even via mail.

- We'd like to have a talk with people who share the same wish, who wish to propose places to meet, help us in creating those places, in cooking a meal, in suggesting subjects to be discussed (ecology, work, anti-patriarchy, speciesism & racism). At the moment, as we are the ones who suggest the meeting, we suggest Barcelona (in the broad territorial sense) as a first meeting place, but we're also ready to be carried away by other melodies. And we suggest the 26th of April to the 1st of May as a provisional date for our meeting.

WE'LL BE GLAD TO RECEIVE PROPOSALS OF ANY KIND, DATES, PLACES, SUBJECTS, POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES, SEMINARS, MENUS.

Don't delay!!! It's urgent, we are few and there are many things to do!!!

Llavor d'anarquia
C/Mestres Casals i Martorell 18
E-08003 BARCELONA
Spain
llavorda@anarchie.net

accused of 'crimes' which were not included in the original summons. When he denied the accusations against him the prosecutor asked for the trial to be speeded up. It was set for two weeks later, (06/14/02) whereas all the other cases heard that day were postponed for three months. At the subsequent hearing the trial was set for today, August 27, due to the absence of two witnesses. During this time first one, then a second, defense lawyer abandoned the case as George was not prepared to apologize for his actions or ask the court for leniency. No other lawyer was prepared to take up his case. Defending anarchists is not good for business in this banana republic! In court today George decided to speak alone, without a lawyer, and to claim responsibility for his actions. He also declared that he did not recognize the court, and was not going to beg for clemency. The judge was visibly confused and consternated by the singular

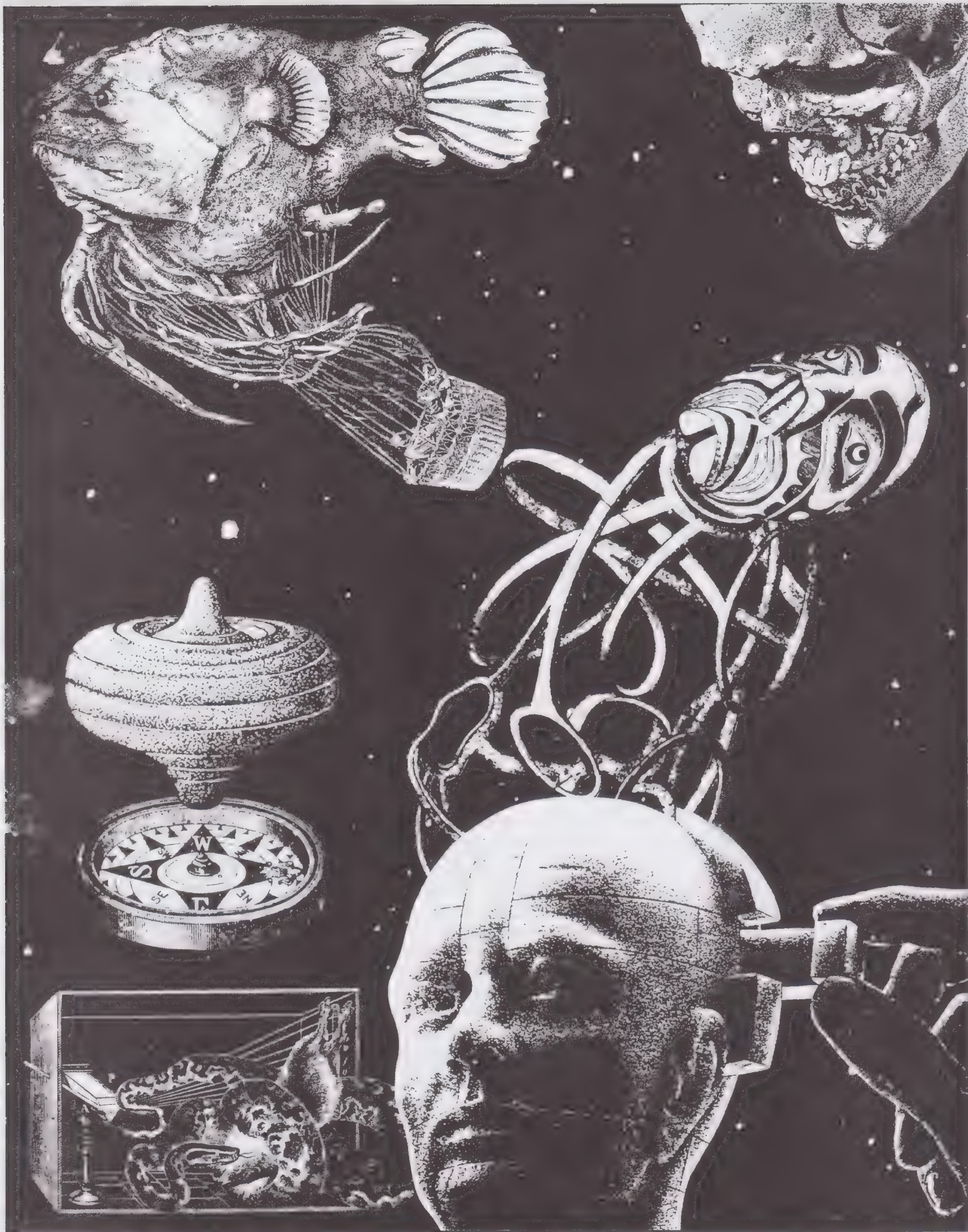
individual before him who, underlining his revolutionary anarchist identity was for the first time in the history of Cyprus, claiming responsibility for an act of rebellion with dignity and pride. The state henchman's immediate reaction was to have George speedily removed from court and sent to prison for a week pending sentence, which he has promised will be the maximum for contempt of court.

All visits have been refused by the prison authorities. Giorgio's anarchist comrades in Cyprus are giving him their unconditional solidarity, with all possible means. But, unlike the state, anarchists know no boundaries. It's up to comrades everywhere to show this fucking island full of soldiers and military bases, that another reality exists: that of the joyous lightness of rebellion.

-Some comrades of
the Anarchist Group of Cyprus
exegersi2002@yahoo.com

2003 BASTARD Conference

BASTARD (Berkeley Anarchist Students of Theory And Research & Development) is pleased to announce the Third Annual Bay Area Anarchist Conference, to be held from 10AM-5PM on Sunday March 30th, 2003 (the day after the San Francisco Anarchist Book Fair) at New College of California, 766 Valencia Street in San Francisco. This year the emphasis will be on anarchist economics, with a track of workshops throughout the day. We will also have workshops on other topics. We are soliciting proposals for workshops now; you can get a form by going to sfbay-anarchists.org or by sending an SASE to ASG c/o the Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley CA 94705.



Twilight of the Machines

John Zerzan

Quite some time ago W.H. Auden summed it up: "The situation of our time surrounds us like a baffling crime." More recently the crisis has been manifesting and deepening in every sphere. Conditions are rapidly worsening and none of the old answers hold up. A friend and neighbor of mine spoke to this with eloquence and understanding: in dealing with others, she counseled, we need to remember that everyone's heart is broken.

Can there really be many left who don't know what direction the world system and this society in particular are taking? Global warming, a function of industrial civilization, will kill the biosphere well before this century is out. Species all over the planet are made extinct at an accelerating rate, dead zones in the oceans grow, the soil and the air are increasingly poisoned, rainforests sacrificed, and all the rest of it.

Children as young as two are on anti-depressants, while emotional disorders among youth have more than doubled in the past 20 years. The teen suicide rate has tripled since the 1970s. A recent study showed that nearly a third of high school students binge drink at least once a month; researchers concluded that "underage drinking has reached epidemic proportions in America."

Meanwhile, most everyone requires some kind of drug just to get through each day, against a backdrop of homicidal outbursts in homes, schools, and workplaces. One of the latest pathological developments—among so many—is

parents murdering their children. A panoply of shocking and horrifying phenomena emanate from the disintegrating core of society. We inhabit a landscape of emptiness, grief, stress, boredom, anxiety in which our "human nature" is as steadily degraded as is what is left of the natural world.

The volume of knowledge is reportedly doubling every five years, but in this increasingly technicized, homogenized world an ever-starker reality goes mainly unchallenged, so far. Michel Houellebecq's 1998 novel *Les Particules Élémentaires* (a bestseller in France) captured a joyless, disillusioned modernity in which cloning comes as a deliverance. Civilization itself has proved a failure, and humanity ends up liquidating itself in absolute surrender to domination. How perfectly in tune with the prevailing, completely defeated and cynical postmodern zeitgeist.

Symbolic culture has atrophied our senses, repressed unmediated experience, and brought us, as Freud predicted, to a state of "permanent internal unhappiness." We are debased and impoverished to the point where we are forced to ask why human activity has become so hostile to humanity—not to mention its enmity to other life forms on this planet.

By their very titles, recent books like *All Connected Now: Life in the First Global Civilization* and *What Will Be: How the New World of Information Will Change Our Lives* express the resignation to an ever more standardized and bereft situation. Such works express the creative exhaustion and moral bankruptcy of the age, in which massive dehumanization and

After about thirty years without social movements, we are seeing a rebirth. Driven and informed by the growing crisis in every sphere, reaching deeper for understanding and critique than did the movement of the 1960s, the new movement is “anarchist,” for want of a better term. Ever since the several days’ anti-World Trade Organization militancy in the streets of Seattle in November 1999, the orientation of anti-globalization has become steadily more evident.

rampant destruction of nature vie for fulfillment of their interrelated projects.

1997-98 saw several months of smoke all across Southeast Asia as four million hectares of forests burned. Four years later, hundreds of fires raged for many weeks across eastern Australia, set by bored teenagers. In the U.S., groundwater and soil pollution levels have risen measurably because of concentrations of anti-depressants in human urine. Alienation in society and the annihilation of plant and animal communities join in a ghastly, interlocked dance of violence against health and life.

Reified existence progressively disables whatever and whoever questions it. How else to account for the stunningly accommodationist nature of postmodernism, allergic to any questioning of the basics of the reigning techno-capitalist malignancy? And yet a questioning is emerging, and is fast taking shape as the deep impetus of a renewed social movement.

As the life-world’s vital signs worsen on every level, the best minds should be paying close attention and seeking solutions. Instead, most have found an infinitude of ways to ponder the paralyzing dichotomy of civilization versus nature, unable to reach an increasingly unavoidable conclusion. A few farsighted individuals began the questioning in modern times. Horkheimer came to realize that domination of nature and humans, and the instrumental reason behind that domination, flow from the “deepest layers of civilization.” Bataille grasped that “the very movement in which man negates Mother Earth who gave birth to him, opens the path to subjugation.”

After about thirty years without social movements, we are seeing a rebirth. Driven and informed by the growing crisis

in every sphere, reaching deeper for understanding and critique than did the movement of the 1960s, the new movement is “anarchist,” for want of a better term. Ever since the several days’ anti-World Trade Organization militancy in the streets of Seattle in November 1999, the orientation of anti-globalization has become steadily more evident. “Anarchism is the dominant perspective within the movement,” Barbara Epstein judged in a fall 2001 report. Esther Kaplan observed in February 2002 that “as the months have rolled by since Seattle, more and more activists, with little fanfare, have come to explicitly identify as anarchists, and anarchist-minded collectives are on the rise...The anarchist fringe is fast becoming the movement’s center.” David Graeber put it even more succinctly: “Anarchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what’s new and hopeful about it.” Henry Kissinger referred to the anti-globalization protests of 1999 and 2000 as “early warning signals” of a “potential political weight” in the industrialized countries and the Third World, as a threat to the world system itself. A CIA report that became public in spring 2000, “Global Trends 2015,” predicted that the biggest obstacle to globalization in the new millennium would be a possible joining together of the “First World” protest movement with the struggles of indigenous people to maintain their integrity against encroaching capital and technology.

Which introduces a more important question about this movement and its threatening connection to the centuries of struggles against Empire in the not-yet-industrialized world. Namely, if it is increasingly anarchy-oriented, what does this anarchism consist of?

I think it is fairly clear that it is becoming something other than part of the left. Until now, every modern anti-capitalist movement had at its core an acceptance of the expansion of the means of production and the continuing development of technology. Now there is an explicit refusal of this productionist orientation; it is in the ascendant in the new anarchy movement.

This anarcho-primitivist (or simply primitivist) tendency knows that to account for today’s grim realities there needs to be a deeper look at institutions once almost universally taken for granted. Despite the postmodern ban on investigation of these institutions’ origins, the new outlook brings even division of labor and domestication into question as ultimate root causes of our present extremity of existence. Technology, meaning a system of ever greater division of labor or specialization, is indicted as the motor of ever greater technicization of the life-world. Civilization, which arrives when division of labor reaches the stage that produces domestication, is also now seen as deeply problematic. Whereas the domestication of animals and plants was once assumed as a given, now its logic is brought into focus. To see the meaning of genetic engineering and human cloning, for example, is to grasp them as implicit in the basic move to domination of nature, which is domestication. Though it is apparent that this critical approach raises more questions than it answers, a developing anarchy consciousness that does not aim at definitive answers cannot turn back.

Cannot turn back to the old, failed left, that is. Who doesn’t know at this point that something different is urgently needed?

One of the touchstones or inspirations of primitivist anarchy is the paradigm shift in the fields of anthropology and archaeology in recent decades, concerning human social life during "prehistory." Civilization appeared only some 9,000 years ago. Its duration is dwarfed by the thousands of human generations who enjoyed what might be called a state of natural anarchy. The general orthodoxy in the anthropological literature, even including textbooks, portrays life outside of civilization as one of ample leisure time; an egalitarian, food-sharing mode of life; relative autonomy or equality of the sexes; and the absence of organized violence.

Humans used fire to cook fibrous vegetables almost two million years ago, and navigated on the open seas at least 800,000 years ago. They had an intelligence equal to ours, and enjoyed by far the most successful, non-destructive human adaptation to the natural world that has ever existed. Whereas the textbook question used to be, "Why did it take Homo so long to adopt domestication or agriculture?" now texts ask why they did it at all.

As the negative and even terminal fruits of technology and civilization become ever clearer, the shift to a Luddite, anti-civilization politics makes greater sense all the time. It is not very surprising to detect its influence being registered in various circumstances, including that of the massive anti-G8 protests in Genoa, July 2001. 300,000 people took part and \$50 million in damage was caused. The Italian minister of the interior blamed the anarchist "black bloc," and its supposed primitivist outlook in particular, for the level of militancy.

How much time do we have to effect what is necessary to save the biosphere and our very humanness? The old approaches are so many discredited efforts to run this world, which is a massified grid of production and estrangement. Green or primitivist anarchy prefers the vista of radically decentralized, face-to-face community, based on what nature can give rather than on how complete domination of nature can become. Our vision runs directly counter to the dominant trajectory of technology and capital, for the most obvious of reasons.

The left has failed monumentally, in terms of the individual and in terms of nature. Meanwhile, the distance between the left and the new anarchy movement keeps widening. Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Rorty, for instance, long absurdly for a renewed connection between intellectuals and unions, as if this chimera would somehow change anything on a basic level. Jurgen Habermas' *Between Facts and Norms* is an apologetic for things as they are, blind to the real colonization of modern life, and even more uncritical and affirmative than his previous works. Hardt and Negri speak to the choice involved rather directly: "We would be anarchists if we were not to speak...from the standpoint of a materiality constituted in the networks of productive cooperation, in other words, from the perspective of a humanity that is constructed productively...No, we are not anarchists but communists." Conversely, to further clarify the issue, Jesus Sepulveda observed that "anarchy and indigenous movements fight against the civilized order and its practice of standardization."

Not all anarchists subscribe to the increasing suspicions about technology and civilization. Noam Chomsky and Murray Bookchin, for example, insist on the traditional embrace of progressive development. The Marxian heart of anarcho-syndicalism typifies this adherence and is fading

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away with its leftist relatives.

Marx, who knew so much about the impact of the productive process and its destructive course as division of labor, nonetheless believed (or wanted to believe) that the technological dynamic would undermine capitalism. But "all that is solid" does *not* "melt into air"; rather it becomes more like what it always was. This is as true for civilization as for capitalism.

And civilization now has the form technology gives it, inseparable from the rest of the social order—the world landscape of capital—and embodying and expressing its deepest values. "We have only purely technological conditions left," concluded Heidegger, whose formulation is itself sufficient to expose the myth of technology's "neutrality."

At its origin in division of labor and until now, technology has been an assumption, repressed as an object of attention. At the point when generalized technicization characterizes the world and is the most dominant aspect of modern life, the veil is being lifted. Technology's invasive colonization of everyday life and systematic displacement of the physical environment can no longer be ignored or concealed. A thousand questions push forward.

Health is just one, as we witness the resurgence and multiplication of diseases, increasingly resistant to the industrial medicine that claimed to be erasing them. Antidepressants mask some of the symptoms of rising levels of sorrow, depression, anxiety, and despair, while we are supposed to remain in the dark about the multisensory richness, diversity, and immediacy that technology leaches out of our lives. Cyberspace promises connection, empowerment, variety to people who have never been so isolated, disempowered, and standardized. Each new study confirms

Spengler, Tainter and many others concur that collapse is inherent in civilizations. We may be approaching the collapse of this civilization more quickly than we can grasp, with results even more unimaginable. Along with the rapid degradation of the physical world, are we not seeing a disintegration of the symbol system of Western civilization? So many ways to register the sinking credibility of what is ever more nakedly the direct rule of technology and capital.

that even a few hours' internet use produces the latter effects. Technology has also served to extend the reach of work via the many gadgets, especially cell phones, beepers, and e-mail, that keep millions in harness regardless of time or place.

What is the cultural ethos that has blunted criticism and resistance and, in effect, legitimated the illegitimate? None other than postmodernism, which may have finally reached the nadir of its moral and intellectual bankruptcy.

Seyla Benhabib provides a compelling version of postmodern thought in three theses: "the death of man understood as the death of the autonomous, self-reflective subject, capable of acting on principle; the death of history, understood as the severance of the epistemic interest in history of struggling groups in constructing their past narratives; the death of metaphysics, understood as the impossibility of criticizing or legitimizing institutions, practices, and traditions other than through the immanent appeal to self-legitimation of 'small narratives'." Marshall Berman encapsulates postmodernism as "a philosophy of despair masquerading as radical intellectual chic...the counterpoint to the civilizational collapse going on around us."

Postmodernists champion diversity, difference, and heterogeneity, choosing to see reality as fluid and indeterminate. The actual parallel to this attitude is found in the movement of commodities with brief shelf-lives, circulating meaninglessly in a globalized, fast-food hip consumerism. Postmodernism insists on surface, and is at pains to discredit any notion of authenticity. No deep meanings are accepted; universals of any kind are scorned in favor of a supposed particularity. The meaning of a universal, homogenizing technology, on the other hand, is not only unquestioned, but is embraced. The connection between the imperialism of technology and the loss of meaning in society never dawns on the

postmodernists.

Born of the defeat of the movements of the 1960s and grown ever more embarrassingly impoverished during the post-'60s decades of defeat and reaction, postmodernism is the name for prostration before the monstrous facts. Happy to accept the present as one of technonature and technoculture, Donna Haraway epitomizes the postmodern surrender. Technology, it seems, always was; there is no way to stand outside its culture; the "natural" is no more than the pervasive naturalization of culture. In sum, there is no "nature" to defend, "we're all cyborgs." This stance is obviously of benefit in the war against nature; more specifically in the wars against women, indigenous cultures, surviving species, indeed against all of non-engineered life.

For Haraway, technological prosthesis "becomes a fundamental category for understanding our most intimate selves" as we merge with the machine. "Technoscience...[is] unmistakably science for us." Unsurprisingly, she has chided those who would resist genetic engineering, with the reminder that the world is too "unsettled, dirty" for simplistic verdicts about the practices of technoscience. In truth, opposing it is "redactive" and "foolish."

Sadly, there are all too many who follow her path of capitulation to the death-trip we've been forced on. Daniel R. White writes, rather incredibly, of "a postmodern-ecological rubric that steps past the traditional either-or of the Oppressor and the Oppressed." He further muses, echoing Haraway: "We are all becoming cyborgs. What sort of creatures do we want to be? Do we want to be creatures at all? Would machines be better? What kinds of machines might we become?"

Michel Foucault was, of course, a key postmodern figure whose influence has not been liberatory. He ended up losing his way in the area of power, concluding that power is everywhere and nowhere; this argument facilitated the postmodern conceit that opposing oppression is passé. More specifically, Foucault determined that resisting technology is futile, and that human relations are inescapably technological.

The postmodern period, according to Paul Virilio, is "the era of the sudden *industrialization of the end*, the all-out globalization of the havoc wreaked by progress." We must move past postmodern accommodation and undo this progress.

Civilization is the foundation that decides the rest. As Freud noted, "there are difficulties attaching to the nature of civilization which will not yield to any attempt at reform." "Difficulties" stemming from the origin of civilization as the forced renunciation of Eros and instinctual freedom; "difficulties" that, as he predicted, will produce a state of universal neurosis.

Freud also referred to "the sense of guilt produced by civilization, [which] remains to a large extent unconscious, or appears as sort of malaise, a dissatisfaction." The magnitude of the offense which is civilization explains this great, continuing quantum of guilt, especially since the continual re-enactment of the offense—the curbing of instinctual freedom—is necessary to maintain the coercion and destructiveness that is civilization.

Spengler, Tainter and many others concur that collapse is inherent in civilizations. We may be approaching the collapse of this civilization more quickly than we can grasp, with

results even more unimaginable. Along with the rapid degradation of the physical world, are we not seeing a disintegration of the symbol system of Western civilization? So many ways to register the sinking credibility of what is ever more nakedly the direct rule of technology and capital. Weber, for example, identified the disfiguring or marginalization of face-to-face ethical sensibilities as the most significant consequence of modern processes of development.

The list of crimes is virtually endless. The question is whether or not, when the civilization comes down, it will be allowed to recycle into one more variant of the original crime.

The new movement replies in the negative. Primitivists draw strength from their understanding that no matter how bereft our lives have become in the last ten thousand years, for most of our nearly two million years on the planet, human life appears to have been healthy and authentic. We are moving, this anti-authoritarian current, in the direction of primitive naturalism, and against a totality that moves so precisely away from that condition. As Dario Fo put it, "The best thing today is this fantastic breeze and sun—these young people who are organizing themselves across the world." Another Italian voice filled out this sentiment admirably: "And then at bottom, what really is this globalization of which so many speak? Perhaps the process of the expansion of markets toward the exploitation of the poorest countries and of their resources and away from the richer countries? Perhaps the standardization of culture and the diffusion of a dominant model? But then, why not use the term civilization that certainly sounds less menacing but is fitting, without the necessity of a neologism. There is no doubt that the media—and not just the media—have an interest in mixing everything in a vague anti-globalization soup. So it's up to us to bring clarity to things, to make deep critiques and act in consequence." (*Terra Salvaggio*, July 2000).

It's an all or nothing struggle. Anarchy is just a name for those who embrace its promise of redemption and wholeness, and try to face up to how far we'll need to travel to get there. We humans once had it right, if the anthropologists are to be believed. Now we'll find out if we can get it right again.

Quite possibly our last opportunity as a species.

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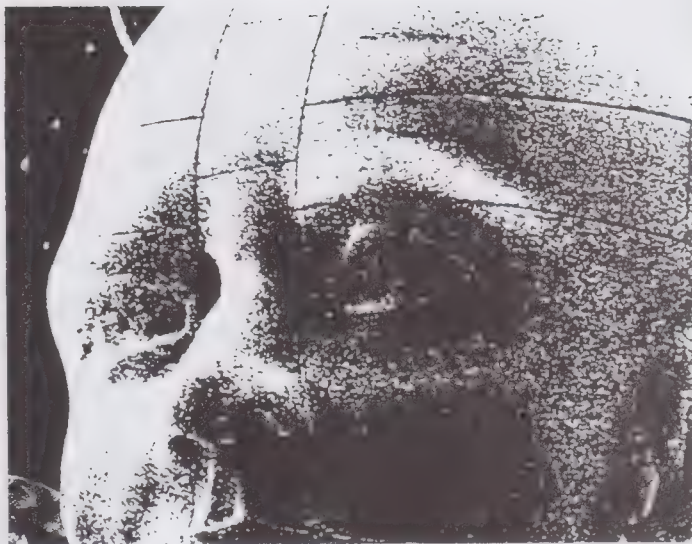
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Anarcho-Communists, Platformism, and Dual Power: Innovation or Travesty?

Lawrence Jarach

"...When a revolutionary situation develops, counter-institutions have the potential of functioning as a real alternative to the existing structure and reliance on them becomes as normal as reliance on the old authoritarian institutions. This is when counter-institutions constitute dual power.

Dual power is a state of affairs in which people have created institutions that fulfill all the useful functions formerly provided by the state. The creation of a general state of dual power is a necessary requirement for a successful revolution..."

-*Love & Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation New York Local Member Handbook*; June, 1997

"...What we need is a theory of the state that starts with an empirical investigation of the origins of the state, the state as it actually exists today, the various experiences of revolutionary dual power, and post-revolutionary societies..."

-*After Winter Must Come Spring: a Self-Critical Evaluation of the Life and Death of the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation* (New York); 2000

"...A revolutionary strategy seeks to undermine the state by developing a dual power strategy. A dual power strategy is one that directly challenges institutions of power and at the same time, in some way, prefigures the new institutions we envision. A dual power strategy not only opposes the state, it also prepares us for the difficult questions that will arise in

a revolutionary situation... [A] program to develop local Copwatch chapters could represent a dual power strategy, since monitoring the police undermines state power by disrupting the cops' ability to enforce class and color lines and also foreshadows a new society in which ordinary people take responsibility for ensuring the safety of their communities."

-*Bring The Ruckus* statement (Phoenix, AZ); Summer, 2001

"...As anarchist communists, our strategy of transforming society is the establishment of dual power: creating alternative and democratic institutions while simultaneously struggling against the established order. If we ever hope to succeed, anarchist actions cannot be random and uncoordinated. We should strive for strategic & tactical unity and coordination in all anarchist factions and affinity groups."

-*Alcatraz* magazine (Oakland, CA); February, 2002

"...[W]e feel that it is necessary to develop a long term strategy, and to place all our actions in the framework of that strategy...this framework draws most heavily from the Platformist tradition [sic] within anarchism. This is not to say that one must, or even should, agree with the specifics of the original Organization Platform of the Libertarian Communists, but is rather a recognition of the importance of collective responsibility, discipline, and tactical unity which the Platformist tradition [sic] puts forward. Clearly then, the framework laid out in this document recognizes that many of

those who today identify as 'anarchists' will strongly disagree with this most basic assumption, and therefore will find the entire framework less than satisfactory. However, our priority, as stated above, is the creation of a mass anarchist movement, and where we feel that building such a movement means alienating others who identify as anarchists, we should have no problem in doing so.

Further, it is necessary to clarify that this framework assumes that it is through the creation of dual power and a culture of resistance that a truly mass, working-class based, anarchist revolutionary movement will be born..."

-“Toward The Creation Of An Anarchist Movement: From Reactive Politics to Proactive Struggle” in *Barricada: Agitational Monthly of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists* [NEFAC] #16 (Boston, MA); April, 2002

“We want Dual Power. We seek to build popular power that can contest and replace state and capitalist power. We actively work to create a new world in the shell of the old—politically, culturally and economically. We do this by both challenging and confronting oppressive institutions and establishing our own liberatory ones.”

-Announcement of the formation of the Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives (FRAC) (East Lansing, MI); August, 2002

“I do not think that word means what you think it means.”

-Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride*

My use of quotes from each of these projects has nothing to do with whether or not they are large or influential in terms of numbers of members or supporters, but with the fact that they have published statements where the term *dual power* has made a prominent appearance. The discussion of what actually constitutes this dual power is sparse; when it does occur, it is either vague or unintentionally funny. It is my intention to examine what the term might mean to those self-described anarchists who use it and why it is used by this particular constellation of anarcho-communists.

What is “anarchist dual power”?

Various projects have been suggested as examples of incipient dual power. There are a few questions that I feel must be answered in order for any real discussion to take place between the partisans of this odd formulation and those who remain skeptical of its relevance to anarchist theory and practice. Are the examples of “anarchist dual power” just anarchist-operated alternatives to current non-revolutionary projects? Are they counter-institutions that replace current non-revolutionary projects with more “democratic” control? Do any of them have the potential prestige, influence, or notoriety to challenge the smooth operation of capitalism and the state? Then there’s the question of centralization versus diffusion; is bigger better, or is more better? Do these

projects require copies, or do they inspire others that are better and more relevant? Are they examples of direct action and self-organization, or do they come with leaders and directors (sometimes called “influential militants” or “revolutionary nuclei”)? Are they used to recruit followers and/or cadre, or are they used to promote solidarity and mutual aid?

Bring The Ruckus champions Copwatch, while others propose extending Independent Media Centers, micropower radio stations, zines, Food Not Bombs. Infoshops, cafes, performance spaces, and other hangouts are sometimes mentioned in the context of “the creation of dual power.” Barter networks, worker collectives, food co-ops, independent unions, and squats also get brought up on occasion. These self-organized projects exist currently for providing mutual aid and support to various communities around the world. They are alternative infrastructures for taking care of the needs of antiauthoritarians trying to eke out some kind of decent living. Creating and maintaining an antiauthoritarian infrastructure of autonomous institutions is good practice for making and carrying out some important decisions in our lives, but it’s impossible for me to believe that these projects could have the potential to challenge the loyalty of non-subculture people toward the state. Until people’s allegiance to the state begins to shift toward these or other alternative or counter-institutions, there’s nothing that even remotely resembles dual power in the works. Indeed, until the state feels threatened by these independent institutions, those who sit in the places of real power will continue to ignore them. Either that or they will silently cheer them on because voluntarism is more efficient (and less expensive to them) than welfare programs. Using the term dual power to describe Food Not Bombs, or your local infoshop, or even your local autonomous union, is a parody of history.

What is real dual power? Lenin & Trotsky speak

“What constitutes the essence of dual power? We must pause upon this question, for an illumination of it has never appeared in historic literature... a class, deprived of power, inevitably strives to some extent to swerve the governmental course in its favor. This does not as yet mean, however, that two or more powers are ruling in society... The two-power regime arises only out of irreconcilable class conflicts—is possible, therefore, only in a revolutionary epoch, and constitutes one of its fundamental elements.” Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*.

“The basic question of every revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution. The highly remarkable feature of our revolution is that it has brought about a *dual power*... Nobody previously thought, or could have thought, of a dual power. What is that dual power? Alongside the...government of the bourgeoisie, another government has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies...The fundamental characteristics of this [dual power] are:

the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the

people from below, in their local areas...;

the replacement of the police and the army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people, by the direct arming of the whole people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants *themselves*, by the armed people *themselves*;

officialdom, the bureaucracy, are either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or at least placed under special control..."

Lenin, *Pravda* April 9, 1917."

Lenin and Trotsky were the ones who originally used the term, so we must look at what they said about it and how they meant it. For these two theorists of Bolshevism, dual power is a condition of revolutionary tension, where the allegiance of the population is split between bourgeois (or non-bourgeois) rule and the incipient governing power of "the people" (through their deputies in the soviets). A general arming of "the people" is a central characteristic of such a revolutionary moment. For Lenin and Trotsky, the term dual power is used as a descriptive category rather than a strategy; looking back on the revolution in Petrograd in 1905, in which the first soviet (council) came into existence spontaneously, Trotsky formulated the term to describe the situation. For Leninists, dual power is the ultimate revolutionary conflict, when the state must fight to survive: overt challenges to its ability to govern are made by councils that, as well as commanding the loyalty of a majority of the population, have the ability to execute and enforce their decisions.

The two main factors leading to a divergent loyalty to each government in Russia in 1917 were domestic and foreign policy. Domestically, the Provisional Government had a difficult time solving the conflicts between workers and owners and between peasants and landlords; being bourgeois, its members wanted the resolution to be based on legal and peaceful compromise. The more radical members of the soviets, factory committees, and peasant committees were interested in worker control and expropriation of property—hence some tension. Externally, the Provisional Government was committed to continuing Russian military involvement in the First World War, while the Bolsheviks were split between those who wanted to conclude a separate peace (Lenin) and those who wanted to widen the war into a general European revolutionary class war (Trotsky). This was the second, and arguably the more crucial, tension that existed between the Provisional Government and the growing power of the Bolshevik-dominated soviets. Incidentally, the

decision-making process was not one of the causes of the tension. The soviets could have been what they eventually became within a year—rubber stamping organs of Bolshevik dictatorship over the workers—and still constituted organs of dual power so long as their members were armed and willing to confront the police and military formations still loyal to the bourgeois state.

Dual power in its original sense, then, is not a program or even a strategy, but a *description* of a transitional political tension and conflict that must be resolved. The Bolsheviks knew that their periodicals didn't constitute organs of dual power; they knew that their meeting-places didn't; they knew that their legal aid committees didn't; they knew that all of their self-help groups didn't. They were clear that the organs of dual power were the soviets of workers, peasants, and soldiers, which were making and executing decisions on production and distribution of goods and services, ownership and control of factories and land, and how to deal with an imperialist war. As authoritarians and statisticians, they were equally clear that these organs needed to be guided and ultimately controlled by them in order to create the necessary infrastructure for a new "workers' government." The Bolsheviks understood that this tension must inevitably end either in revolution or reaction. The situation of dual power

must end with the state crushing the (more or less) independent power of counter-institutions based on an armed population, or the successful taking over/replacement of the state by "the people" and their counter-institutions.

I have no objections to the adoption of non-anarchist ideas, models, or vocabulary to anarchist theory and practice; many aspects of anarchism would be impossible to describe without Marxist language and ideas. However, it is usually clear from the context of their usage that when anarchists say certain things that are also said by Marxists, their meanings are different: "revolution," for example. Language changes through time, but the insinuation of the term dual power into anarchist discourse is a sign of muddled thinking and creeping Leninism, the unfortunate legacy of Love & Rage and similar groupings. Its use by those who call themselves anarchists to describe a situation that is supposed to be anarchist is ahistorical and therefore inaccurate. Its use by Revolutionary Anarchists is vague (at best), confusing—and confused—and too far outside the realm of normative anarchism to accept. Anyone with even a basic grasp of radical history will be able to recognize this. It is a borrowed term with a borrowed history; that history cannot be separated from the term.

Love & Rage and the influence and legacy of Leninism

The Love & Rage project began in the late 1980s when the desire for a mass anarchist federation coincided with the supposed defection to anarchism of all members of the New York-based Trotskyist Revolutionary Socialist League. The RSL had been flirting with anarchists as early as '83, when they began having comradely relations with the New York chapter of the Workers' Solidarity Alliance, an anarcho-syndicalist group. L&R took over all the resources of the RSL, including their newspaper (*The Torch*). This capital extraction allowed them to create a new kind of anarchism—one that was heavily influenced by a mixture of traditional Leninism, New Leftist identity politics, and anti-imperialism. They called it "revolutionary anarchism" and sometimes referred to their ideas as "anarcho-communism" even though they had little to do with the theories and ideas of Kropotkin, Malatesta, Goldman, and others.

They were constantly working on their Statement of Principles, which was meant to show their distinctions from other anarchist and Leninist tendencies. Fewer and fewer individuals worked on the statement, feeding rumors of a small group of influential cadre who were *really* in control; the many other pseudonyms of "Ned Day" were seen as a cover for the dearth of diverse voices. The specter of democratic centralism was spreading. There had been similar speculation from the very beginning. At the conference where the name of the project and their newspaper was decided, some participants had the feeling that the decisions had been made prior to the actual conference, that the conference was used as a public rubberstamp to create a false democratic face for the organization. The strong influence of Bolshevism is clear. One participant at the founding conference even went so far as to suggest that they name the paper *The Torch*.

Hooked into the opportunist politics of anti-imperialism, members of L&R were expected to be supportive of the national liberation movements of oppressed peoples in their struggles to create new states. This generates its own contradictions; but in one of the later incarnations of the Statement, the organization came out in favor of "weaker states" in their struggles against "stronger states." Especially galling at that time (of Operation Desert Shield followed by the Gulf Massacre of 1990-91) was that this was clearly a reference to Iraq—this even after the revelations of the previous mass gassings of Kurds, among other atrocities perpetrated by this "weaker state." Such was their commitment to anti-statism, the cornerstone of anarchism.

Having learned nothing from the previous attempts to create national or continental anarchist federations,

L&R—immediately after it formed—began to lose members through attrition, and the group split not once, but twice; the final split fractured the membership in three directions. Like most similar organizations, at a certain point the tension between ideological flexibility and conformity came to a head, with many feeling that the organizational model chosen and used by L&R after the first split had become incompatible with anarchist ideas. Others decided that the problem was not with the organizational model, but with the anarchism, and they descended into Maoism. Indeed, well before the final split (it could be argued from its very inception), L&R looked and sounded more and more like a Marxist-Leninist outfit with a circle-A clumsily slapped over a hammer-and-sickle. This is the legacy that L&R has left to groups like NEFAC and Bring The Ruckus, both of which include former members of L&R.

Anarcho-Bolshevism?

NEFAC is a champion of the Platform. Regardless of their criticisms of specifics (what is not included in it), NEFAC members find the overall idea of a highly structured organization with written bylaws and other

formal disciplinary measures to be a positive development for anarchists. The Platform was written by several veterans and supporters of the Makhnovist insurgent army of the Ukraine, which was active from 1918-1921. Having successfully beaten the Whites (counter-revolutionaries fighting for the restoration of the monarchy and private capitalism), the Ukrainian anarchists had to face Trotsky's Red Army. The Makhnovists were finally defeated. Makhno and several of his general staff eventually escaped to Paris, where, after a number of years of recovering and establishing contacts with other anarchist exiles from the Soviet Union, they began a project that culminated in the publication and circulation of the Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. In this document, they attempted to explain and understand the reasons for their loss in particular, and the more general loss of an antiauthoritarian people's revolution to the Bolsheviks. They decided that among the main causes were that the anarchists were not disciplined and dedicated (and ruthless?) enough. As a result, they attempted to emulate the political formation of the victorious Bolsheviks (democratic centralism, an untouchable central committee) without using the terminology of the Bolsheviks. They wanted to out-Bolshevize the Bolsheviks, in the hopes of winning the next round of the struggle. It was for these reasons that the Platform was publicly condemned by ex-Makhnovists (including Voline), anarcho-communists (like Malatesta), and others as being a sectarian attempt to create an anarchist program with a Bolshevik organizational structure. The Platform project was unsuccessful.

There is a nagging question in this organizational discussion: why have the promoters of formally structured membership organizations taken an example from a historically unimportant document, an example of unrivalled ineffectiveness? Why have they not used as a model the most "successful" anarchist mass organization—the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation)? From the time of its official founding in 1927, the FAI was feared by government agents, and cheered by a majority of Spanish anarchists.

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The Platform, on the other hand, did not result in anything concrete, other than its condemnation from almost all contemporary anarchist activists and writers as a call for some bizarre hybrid of anarchism and Bolshevism. No actual General Union of Libertarian Communists was formed after the Organizational Platform was circulated. The project of creating a semi-clandestine militarized vanguard (complete with an executive committee) of anarcho-communists was soon after abandoned by the Russian exiles. For almost 70 years the document itself languished in relative obscurity, a curio from anarchist history, something to titillate the trivia-minded. What made it worth rediscovering?

The anarcho-communism of the Platformists is eerily similar to the authoritarian communism of various Leninist gangs. From a cursory examination of their published rhetoric, it is difficult not to conclude that they have taken the “successful” aspects of a Leninist program, a Leninist

vision, and Leninist-Maoist organizing, and more or less removed or modified the vocabulary of the more obviously statist parts. The promoters of this hybridized anarchism—should it be called anarcho-Leninism?—draw on the Platform the same way that the writers of the Platform drew on Leninism. In doing this, the Platformists are in turn trying to reclaim a moment in anarchist history that had been largely (and well-deservedly) forgotten as an embarrassment. By fabricating a “Platformist tradition,” they hope to give

themselves an impeccable anarchist pedigree, allowing the discussion of “anarchist dual power” to occur without needing to justify such a contradictory concept. Unfortunately for them, however, there was never such a “Platformist tradition.”

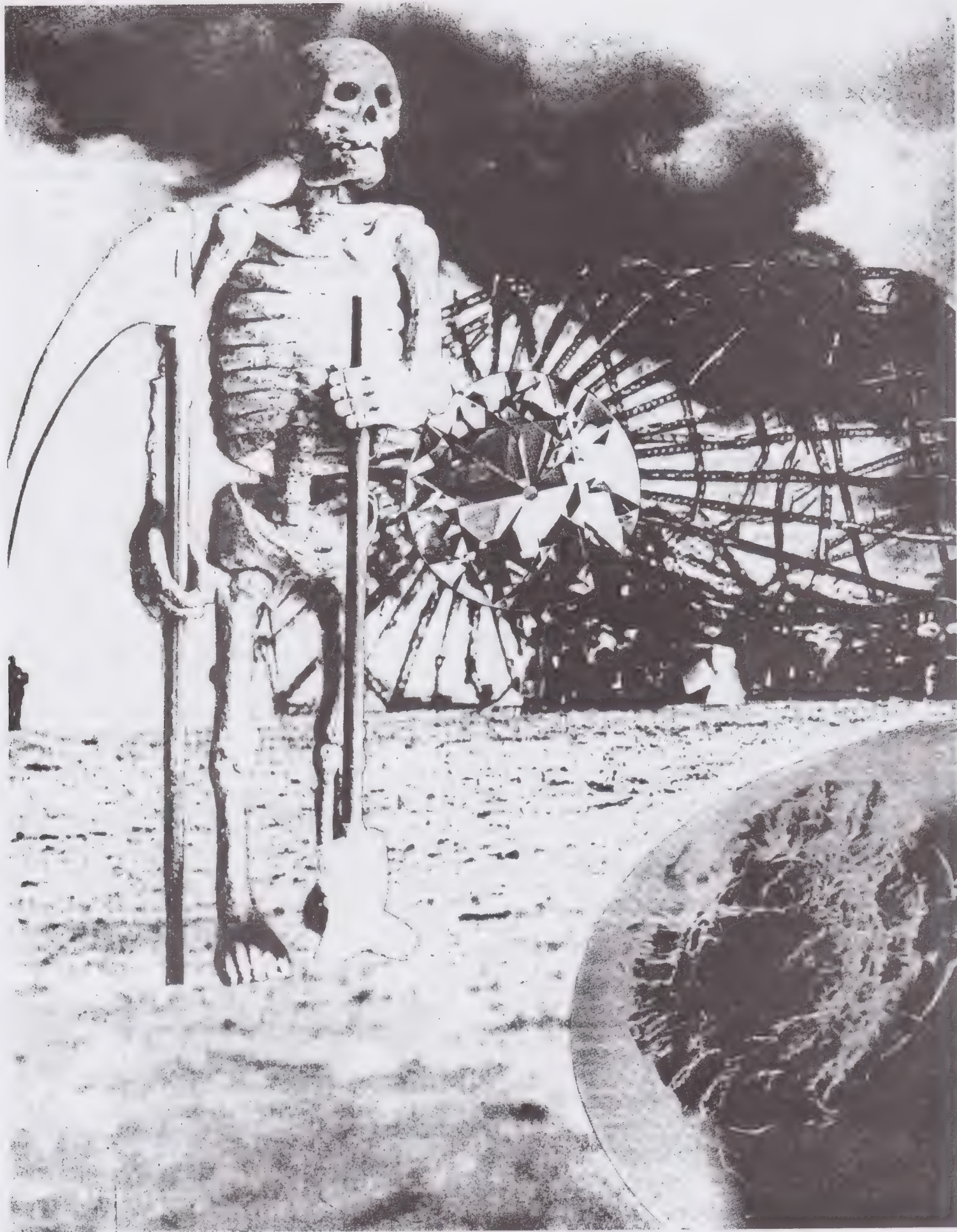
The creation of “anarchist dual power” by the descendants and disciples of Love & Rage goes against the ideas of a more recognizable anarchism (that is, one not directly influenced by Leninist ideas). The fans of this “anarchist dual power” have adopted a, shall we say, unique perspective on the issue of dual power. Historically the term dual power has been used as a way of understanding the class-based tensions that lead either to periods of reaction or political

(i.e. statist) revolution. It is clearly meant to describe a condition of loyalty split between an existing state and a state-in-formation. As the L&R Member Handbook correctly states (as quoted above): “Dual power is a state of affairs in which people have created institutions that fulfill all the useful functions formerly provided by the state.” How this “state of affairs” can be anti-statist is never explained—for the unspectacularly simple reason that it cannot be explained within an anti-statist conceptual model. The entire dual power discourse is concerned with government, with how to create and maintain a set of institutions that can pull the allegiance of the governed away from the existing state. Unless the partisans of dual power have worked out a radically different understanding of what power is, where its legitimacy comes from, how it is maintained, and—more importantly—how anarchists can possibly exercise it within a framework that is historically statist, the discussion of “anarchist dual power” is a mockery of the anarchist principle of being against government.

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Makino and family.



From Politics to Life: Ridding Anarchy of the Leftist Millstone

Wolfi Landstreicher

From the time anarchism was first defined as a distinct radical movement it has been associated with the left, but the association has always been uneasy. Leftists who were in a position of authority (including those who called themselves anarchists, like the leaders of the CNT and the FAI in Spain in 1936-37) found the anarchist aim of the total transformation of life and the consequent principle that the ends should already exist in the means of struggle to be a hindrance to their political programs. Real insurgence always burst far beyond any political program, and the most coherent anarchists saw the realization of their dreams precisely in this unknown place *beyond*. Yet, time after time, when the fires of insurrection cooled (and even occasionally, as in Spain in 1936-37, while they still burnt brightly), leading anarchists would take their place again as "the conscience of the left". But if the expansiveness of anarchist dreams and the principles that it implies have been a hindrance to the political schemes of the left, these schemes have been a far greater millstone around the neck of the anarchist movement, weighing it down with the "realism" that cannot dream.

For the left, the social struggle against exploitation and oppression is essentially a *political program* to be realized by whatever means are expedient. Such a conception obviously requires a political methodology of struggle, and such a methodology is bound to contradict some basic anarchist principles. First of all, politics as a distinct category of social existence is the separation of the decisions that determine

our lives from the execution of those decisions. This separation resides in institutions that make and impose those decisions. It matters little how democratic or consensual those institutions are; the separation and institutionalization inherent in politics always constitute an imposition simply because they require that decisions be made before the circumstances to which they apply arise. This makes it necessary that they take on the form of general rules that are always to be applied in certain types of situations regardless of the specific circumstances. The seeds of ideological thinking—in which ideas rule the activities of individuals rather than serving individuals in developing their own projects—are found here, but I will go into that later. Of equal importance from an anarchist perspective is the fact that power lies in these decision-making and enforcing institutions. And the leftist conception of social struggle is precisely one of influencing, taking over or creating alternative versions of these institutions. In other words, it is a struggle to change, not to destroy institutionalized power relationships.

This conception of struggle, with its programmatic basis requires an organization as the means for carrying out the struggle. The organization represents the struggle, because it is the concrete expression of its program. If those involved define that program as revolutionary and anarchist, then the organization comes to represent revolution and anarchy for them, and the strength of the organization is equated with the strength of revolutionary and anarchist struggle. A clear

...the leftist organization is the means through which the left intends to transform institutionalized power relationships. Whether this is done through appeal to the current rulers and the exercise of democratic rights, through the electoral or violent conquest of state power, through the institutional expropriation of the means of production or through a combination of these means is of little importance. To accomplish this, the organization tries to make itself into an alternative power or a counter-power.

example of this is found in the Spanish revolution where the leadership of the CNT, after inspiring the workers and peasants of Catalonia to expropriate the means of production (as well as arms with which they formed their free militias), did not dissolve the organization and allow the workers to explore the recreation of social life on their own terms, but rather took over management of production. This confusion of management by the union for workers' self-management had results that can be studied by anyone willing to look at those events critically. When the struggle against the ruling order is thus separated from the individuals carrying it out and placed into the hands of the organization, it ceases to be the self-determined project of those individuals and instead becomes a external cause to which they adhere. Because this cause is equated with the organization, the primary activity of the individuals who adhere to it is the maintenance and expansion of the organization.

In fact, the leftist organization is the means through which the left intends to transform institutionalized power relationships. Whether this is done through appeal to the current rulers and the exercise of democratic rights, through the electoral or violent conquest of state power, through the institutional expropriation of the means of production or through a combination of these means is of little importance. To accomplish this, the organization tries to make itself into an alternative power or a counter-power. This is why it must embrace the current ideology of power, i.e., democracy. Democracy is that system of separated and institutionalized decision-making that requires the creation of social consensus for programs put forward. Although power always resides in coercion, in the democratic framework, it is justified through

the consent it can win. This is why it is necessary for the left to seek as many adherents as possible, numbers to tally in support of its programs. Thus, in its adherence to democracy, the left must embrace the quantitative illusion.

The attempt to win adherents requires the appeal to the lowest common denominator. So instead of carrying on a vital theoretical exploration, the left develops a set of simplistic doctrines through which to view the world and a litany of moral outrages perpetrated by the current rulers, which leftists hope will have mass appeal. Any questioning or exploration outside of this ideological framework is vehemently condemned or viewed with incomprehension. The incapacity for serious theoretical exploration is the cost of accepting the quantitative illusion according to which numbers of adherents, regardless of their passivity and ignorance, are considered the reflection of a strong movement rather than the quality and coherence of ideas and practice.

The political necessity of appealing to "the masses" also moves the left to use the method of making piece-meal demands to the current rulers. This method is certainly quite consistent with a project of *transforming* power relationships, precisely because it does not challenge those relationships at their roots. In fact, by making demands of those in power, it implies that simple (though possibly extreme) adjustments of the current relationships are sufficient for the realization of the leftist program. What is not put into question in this method is the ruling order itself, because this would threaten the political framework of the left.

Implicit in this piece-meal approach to change is the doctrine of progressivism (in fact, one of the more popular labels among leftists and liberals nowadays—who would rather leave behind these other sullied labels—is precisely "progressive"). Progressivism is the idea that the current order of things is the result of an ongoing (though possibly "dialectical") process of improvement and that if we put in the effort (whether through voting, petition, litigation, civil disobedience, political violence or even the conquest of power—anything other than its destruction), we can take this process further. The concept of progress and the piece-meal approach that is its practical expression point to another quantitative aspect of the leftist conception of social transformation. This transformation is simply a matter of degrees, of one's position along an ongoing trajectory. The right amount of adjustment will get us "there" (wherever "there" is). Reform and revolution are simply different levels of the same activity. Such are the absurdities of leftism which remains blind to the overwhelming evidence that the only trajectory that we have been on at least since the rise of capitalism and industrialism is the increasing impoverishment of existence, and this cannot be reformed away.

The piece-meal approach and the political need for categorization also leads the left to valorize people in terms of their membership in various oppressed and exploited groups, such as "workers", "women", "people of color", "gays and lesbians" and so on. This categorization is the basis of identity politics. Identity politics is the particular form of false opposition in which oppressed people choose to *identify with* a particular social category through which their oppression is reinforced as a supposed act of defiance against their oppression. In fact, the continued identification with this

social role limits the capacity of those who practice identity politics to analyze their situation in this society deeply and to act *as individuals* against their oppression. It thus guarantees the continuation of the social relationships that cause their oppression. But only as members of categories are these people useful as pawns in the political maneuverings of the left, because such social categories take on the role of pressure groups and power blocs within the democratic framework.

The political logic of the left, with its organizational requirements, its embrace of democracy and the quantitative illusion and its valorization of people as mere members of social categories, is inherently collectivist, suppressing the individual as such. This expresses itself in the call for individuals to sacrifice themselves to the various causes, programs and organizations of the left. Behind these calls one finds the manipulative ideologies of collective identity, collective responsibility and collective guilt. Individuals who are defined as being part of a "privileged" group—"straight", "white", "male", "first-world", "middle class"—are held responsible for all the oppression attributed to that group. They are then manipulated into acting to expiate these "crimes", giving uncritical support to the movements of those more oppressed than they are. Individuals who are defined as being part of an oppressed group are manipulated into accepting collective identity in this group out of a mandatory "solidarity"—sisterhood, black nationalism, queer identity, etc. If they reject or even deeply and radically criticize this group identity, this is equated with acceptance of their own oppression. In fact, the individual who acts on his or her own (or only with those with whom s/he has developed real affinity) against her or his oppression and exploitation as s/he experiences it in his or her life, is accused of "bourgeois individualism", in spite of the fact that s/he is struggling precisely against the alienation, separation and atomization that is the inherent result of the *collective* alienated social activity that the state and capital—so-called "bourgeois society"—impose upon us.

Because leftism is the active perception of social struggle as a political program, it is ideological from top to bottom. The struggle of the left does not grow out of the desires, needs and dreams of the living individuals exploited, oppressed, dominated and dispossessed by this society. It is not the activity of people striving to reappropriate their own lives and seeking the tools necessary for doing so. Rather it is a program formulated in the minds of leftist leaders or in organizational meetings that exists above and before people's individual struggles and to which these latter are to subordinate themselves. Whatever the slogan of this program—socialism, communism, anarchism, sisterhood, the African people, animal rights, earth liberation, primitivism, workers' self-management, etc., etc.—it does not provide a tool for individuals to use in their own struggles against domination, but rather demands individuals to exchange the domination of the ruling order for the domination of the leftist program. In other words, it demands that individuals continue to give up their capacity to determine their own existence.

At its best, the anarchist endeavor has always been the total transformation of existence based on the reappropriation of life by each and every individual, acting in free association with others of their choosing. This vision can be found in the most poetic writings of nearly every well-known

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anarchist, and it is what made anarchism "the conscience of the left". But of what use is it to be the conscience of a movement that does not *and cannot* share the breadth and depth of one's dreams, if one desires to realize those dreams? In the history of the anarchist movement, those perspectives and practices closest to the left, such as anarcho-syndicalism and platformism, have always had far less of the dream and far more of the program about them. Now that leftism has ceased to be a significant force in any way distinguishable from the rest of the *political* sphere at least in the West of the world, there is certainly no reason to continue carrying this millstone around our necks. The realization of anarchist dreams, of the dreams of every individual still capable of dreaming and desiring independently to be the autonomous creators of their own existence, requires a conscious and rigorous break with the left. At minimum, this break would mean:

1. **The rejection of a *political* perception of social struggle;** a recognition that revolutionary struggle is not a program, but is rather the struggle for the individual and social reappropriation of the totality of life. As such it is inherently *anti-political*. In other words, it is opposed to any form of social organization—and any method of struggle—in which the decisions about how to live and struggle are separated from the execution of those decisions regardless of how democratic and participatory this separated decision-making process may be.
2. **The rejection of organizationalism,** meaning by this the rejection of the idea that any organization can represent exploited individuals or groups, social

Since this break with the left is based in the necessity to free the practice of anarchy from the confines of politics, it is certainly not an embrace of the right or any other part of the political spectrum. It is rather a recognition that a struggle for the transformation of the totality of life, a struggle to take back each of our lives as our own in a collective movement for individual realization, can only be hampered by political programs, “revolutionary” organizations and ideological constructs that demand our service, because these too, like the state and capital, demand that we give our lives to them rather than take our lives as our own.

struggle, revolution or anarchy. Therefore also the rejection of all formal organizations—parties, unions, federations and their like—which, due to their programmatic nature, take on such a representative role. This does *not* mean the rejection of the capacity to organize the specific activities necessary to the revolutionary struggle, but rather the rejection of the subjection of the organization of tasks and projects to the formalism of an organizational program. The only task that has ever been shown to require formal organization is the development and maintenance of a formal organization.

3. **The rejection of democracy and the quantitative illusion.** The rejection of the view that the number of adherents to a cause, idea or program is what determines the strength of the struggle, rather than the qualitative value of the practice of struggle as an attack against the institutions of domination and as a reappropriation of life. The rejection of every institutionalization or formalization of decision-making, and indeed of every conception of decision-making as a moment separated from life and practice. The rejection, as well, of the evangelistic method that strives to win over the masses. Such a method assumes that theoretical exploration is at an end, that one has the answer to which all are to

adhere and that therefore every method is acceptable for getting the message out even if that method contradicts what we are saying. It leads one to seek followers who accept one's position rather than comrades and accomplices with which to carry on one's explorations. The practice instead of striving to carry out one's projects, as best one can, in a way consistent with one's ideas, dreams and desires, thus attracting potential accomplices with whom to develop relationships of affinity and expand the practice of revolt.

4. **The rejection of making demands to those in power,** choosing rather a practice of direct action and attack. The rejection of the idea that we can realize our desire for self-determination through piece-meal demands which, at best, only offer a temporary amelioration of the harmfulness of the social order of capital. Recognition of the necessity to attack this society in its totality, to achieve a practical and theoretical awareness in each partial struggle of the totality that must be destroyed. Thus, as well, the capacity to see what is potentially revolutionary—what has moved beyond the logic of demands and of piece-meal changes—in partial social struggles, since, after all, every radical, insurrectionary rupture has been sparked by a struggle that started as an attempt to gain partial demands, but that moved in practice from demanding what was desired to seizing it and more.
5. **The rejection of the idea of progress,** of the idea that the current order of things is the result of an ongoing process of improvement that we can take further, possibly even to its apotheosis, if we put in the effort. The recognition that the current trajectory—which the rulers and their loyal reformist and “revolutionary” opposition call “progress”—is inherently harmful to individual freedom, free association, healthy human relations, the totality of life and the planet itself. The recognition that this trajectory must be brought to an end and new ways of living and relating developed if we are to achieve full autonomy and freedom. (This does not necessarily lead to an absolute rejection of technology and civilization, and such a rejection does not constitute the bottom line of a break with the left, but the rejection of progress most certainly means a willingness to seriously and critically examine and question civilization and technology, and particularly industrialism. Those who are not willing to raise such questions most likely continue to hold to the myth of progress.)
6. **The rejection of identity politics.** The recognition that, while various oppressed groups experience their dispossession in ways specific to their oppression and analysis of these specificities is necessary in order to get a full understanding of how domination functions, nonetheless, dispossession is fundamentally the stealing away of the capacity of each of us *as individuals* to create our lives on our own terms in free association with others. The reappropriation of life on the social level, as well as its *full* reappropriation

on the individual level, can only occur when we stop identifying ourselves essentially in terms of our social identities.

7. **The rejection of collectivism**, of the subordination of the individual to the group. The rejection of the ideology of collective responsibility (a rejection that does not mean the refusal of social or class analysis, but rather that removes the moral judgment from such analysis, and refuses the dangerous practice of blaming individuals for activities that have been done in the name of, or that have been attributed to, a social category of which they are said to be a part, but about which they had no choice—e.g., “Jew”, “gypsy”, “male”, “white”, etc.). The rejection of the idea that anyone, either due to “privilege” or due to supposed membership in a particular oppressed group, owes uncritical solidarity to any struggle or movement, and the recognition that such a conception is a major obstruction in any serious revolutionary process. The creation of collective projects and activities *to serve the needs and desires of the individuals involved*, and not vice versa. The recognition that the fundamental alienation imposed by capital is not based in any hyper-individualist ideology that it may promote, but rather stems from the *collective* project of production that it imposes, which expropriates our individual creative capacities to fulfill its aims. The recognition of the liberation of each and every individual to be able to determine the conditions of her or his existence in free association with others of her or his choosing—i.e., the individual and social reappropriation of life—as the primary aim of revolution.
8. **The rejection of ideology**, that is to say, the rejection of every program, idea, abstraction, ideal or theory

that is placed above life and individuals as a construct to be served. The rejection, therefore, of God, the State, the Nation, the Race, etc., but also of Anarchism, Primitivism, Communism, Freedom, Reason, the Individual, etc. when these become ideals to which one is to sacrifice oneself, one's desires, one's aspirations, one's dreams. The use of ideas, theoretical analysis and the capacity to reason and think abstractly and critically as tools for realizing one's aims, for reappropriating life and acting against everything that stands in the way of this reappropriation. The rejection of easy answers that come to act as blinders to one's attempts to examine the reality one is facing in favor of ongoing questioning and theoretical exploration.

As I see it, these are what constitute a real break with the left. Where any of these rejections are lacking—whether in theory or practice—vestiges of the left remain, and this is a hindrance to our project of liberation. Since this break with the left is based in the necessity to free the practice of anarchy from the confines of politics, it is certainly not an embrace of the right or any other part of the political spectrum. It is rather a recognition that a struggle for the transformation of the totality of life, a struggle to take back each of our lives as our own in a collective movement for individual realization, can only be hampered by political programs, “revolutionary” organizations and ideological constructs that demand our service, because these too, like the state and capital, demand that we give our lives to them rather than take our lives as our own. Our dreams are much too large for the narrow confines of political schemes. It is long past time that we leave the left behind and go on our merry way toward the unknown of insurrection and the creation of full and self-determined lives.

Facing the Enemy

Continued from page 13

mitted to anarchist principles to begin with.

In one of his illogical tirades against opponents of the *Platform* (p. 142), Skirda exclaims: “If one wanted to reject [the *Platform*], then one also had to throw out ‘the baby with the bathwater,’ that is, repudiate what was...the most radical revolutionary experiment of the century.” Which of course is nonsensical in the extreme. The Makhnovist experiment was one of the most radical of the century, but that experiment had nothing directly to do with injecting authoritarian leftist organizational practices into the anarchist milieu ten years later!

Skirda continues, not understanding how any anarchists could ever oppose the incoherent synthesis of leftist organization and anarchist ideology proposed by the *Platform*: “Who could challenge that? Always the same old figures, the usual ditherers, the incorrigible blatherers, all those who in the end had something to lose, be it their petty vanity, or ultimately cozy position in estab-

lished society. That said, the loudest opposition came from the Russian émigré community...and a handful of anarchist elders.” But all was not lost for Skirda, since years later

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a few platformist-inspired groups managed to organize themselves and carry on the ever-misunderstood, ever-persecuted cause. Of course, the actual practice of some of these platformist groups proved to be a pathetic travesty, with platformists taking secret control of the French post-World War II Anarchist Federation with a manipulative scheme worthy of any power-hungry Marxist-Leninists (recounted in Chapter 18).

Despite its failures, *Facing the Enemy* is an important book and I recommend that every anarchist seriously committed to encouraging social revolution read it. Along with chronicling an episodic, Eurocentric and polemical (but still worthwhile) history of anarchism, it provides a fairly comprehensive catalog of the most tempting authoritarian, leftist compromises that cut the heart out of anarchist practice and turn anarchist theory into a rigid ideology. Ultimately, the unintended message of Skirda's book is that not only is the platformism it pushes hopelessly anachronistic in today's anarchist milieu, but historically it has been the ideology of demoralized losers.



Collage by James Koehnline

Rejecting the Reification of Revolt

Jason McQuinn

Anarchist critiques of leftism have a history nearly as long as the term “left” has had a political meaning. The early anarchist movement emerged from many of the same struggles as the socialist movement (a major part of the political left), from which it eventually differentiated itself. Both were primarily a product of the social ferment which gave rise to the Age of Revolutions—introduced by the English, American and French Revolutions. This was the historical period in which early capitalism was developing through the enclosure of commons to destroy community self-sufficiency, the industrialization of production with a factory system based on scientific techniques, and the aggressive expansion of the commodity market economy throughout the world. But the anarchist idea has always had deeper, more radical and more holistic implications than mere socialist criticism of the exploitation of labor under capitalism. This is because the anarchist idea springs from both the social ferment of the Age of Revolutions *and* the critical imagination of individuals seeking the abolition of every form of social alienation and domination.

The anarchist idea has an indelibly individualist foundation upon which its social critiques stand, always and everywhere proclaiming that only free individuals can create a free, unalienated society. Just as importantly, this individualist foundation has included the idea that the exploitation or oppression of any individual diminishes the freedom and integrity of all. This is quite unlike the collectivist ideologies of the political left, in which the individual is persistently devalued, denigrated or denied in both theory and practice—though not always in the ideological window dressing that is

meant only to fool the naive. It is also what prevents genuine anarchists from taking the path of authoritarians of the left, right and center who casually employ mass exploitation, mass oppression and frequently mass imprisonment or murder to capture, protect and expand their holds on political and economic power.

Because anarchists understand that only people freely organizing themselves can create free communities, they refuse to sacrifice individuals or communities in pursuit of the kinds of power that would inevitably prevent the emergence of a free society. But given the almost mutual origins of the anarchist movement and the socialist left, as well as their historical battles to seduce or capture the support of the international workers movement by various means, it isn't surprising that over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries socialists have often adopted aspects of anarchist theory or practice as their own, while even more anarchists have adopted aspects of leftist theory and practice into various left-anarchist syntheses. This is despite the fact that in the worldwide struggles for individual and social freedom the political left has everywhere proven itself either a fraud or a failure in practice. Wherever the socialist left has been successful in organizing and taking power it has at best reformed (and rehabilitated) capitalism or at worst instituted new tyrannies, many with murderous policies—some of genocidal proportions.

Thus, with the stunning international disintegration of the political left following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the time is now past due for all anarchists to reevaluate every compromise that has been or continues to be made with the fading remnants of leftism. Whatever usefulness there might

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have been in the past for anarchists to make compromises with leftism is evaporating with the progressive disappearance of the left from even token opposition to the fundamental institutions of capitalism: wage labor, market production, and the rule of value.

Leftists in the anarchist milieu

The rapid slide of the political left from the stage of history has increasingly left the international anarchist milieu as the only revolutionary anti-capitalist game in town. As the anarchist milieu has mushroomed in the last decade, most of its growth has come from disaffected youth attracted to its increasingly visible, lively and iconoclastic activities and media. But a significant minority of that growth has also come from former leftists who have—sometimes slowly and sometimes suspiciously swiftly—decided that anarchists might have been right in their critiques of political authority and the state all along. Unfortunately, not all leftists just fade away—or change their spots—overnight. Most of the former leftists entering the anarchist milieu inevitably bring with them many of the conscious and unconscious leftist attitudes, prejudices, habits and assumptions that structured their old political milieus. Certainly, not all of these attitudes, habits and assumptions are necessarily authoritarian or anti-anarchist, but just as clearly many are.

Part of the problem is that many former leftists tend to misunderstand anarchism only as a form of anti-statist leftism, ignoring or downplaying its indelibly individualist foundation as irrelevant to social struggles. Many simply don't understand the huge divide between a self-organizing movement seeking to abolish every form of social alienation and a merely political movement seeking to reorganize production in a more egalitarian form. While others do understand the divide quite well, but seek to re-form the anarchist milieu into a political movement anyway, for

various reasons. Some former leftists do this because they consider the abolition of social alienation unlikely or impossible; some because they remain fundamentally opposed to any individualist (or sexual, or cultural, etc.) component of social theory and practice. Some cynically realize that they will never achieve any position of power in a genuinely anarchist movement and opt for building more narrowly political organizations with more room for manipulation. Still others, unused to autonomous thinking and practice, simply feel anxious and uncomfortable with many aspects of the anarchist tradition and wish to push those aspects of leftism within the anarchist milieu that help them feel less threatened and more secure—so that they can continue to play their former roles of cadre or militant, just without an explicitly authoritarian ideology to guide them.

In order to understand current controversies within the anarchist milieu, anarchists need to remain constantly aware—and carefully critical—of all this. *Ad hominem* attacks within the anarchist milieu are nothing new, and most often a waste of time, because they substitute for rational criticism of people's actual positions. (Too often rational criticism of positions is simply ignored by those unable to argue for their own positions, whose only recourse is to wild or irrelevant accusations or attempted smears.) But there remains an important place for *ad hominem* criticism addressed to people's chosen identities, especially when these identities are so strong that they include sedimented, often unconscious, layers of habits, prejudices and dependencies. These habits, prejudices and dependencies—leftist or otherwise—all constitute highly appropriate targets for anarchist criticism.

Recuperation and the Left-Wing of Capital

Historically, the vast majority of leftist theory and practice has functioned as a loyal opposition to capitalism. Leftists have been (often vociferously) critical of particular aspects of capitalism, but always ready to reconcile themselves with the broader international capitalist system whenever they've been able to extract a bit of power, partial reforms—or sometimes, just the vague promise of partial reforms. For this reason leftists have often been quite justifiably criticized (by both ultra-leftists and by anarchists) as the left wing of capital.

It's not just a problem that those leftists who claim to be anti-capitalist don't really mean it, although some have consciously used such lies to gain positions of power for themselves in opposition movements. The major problem is that leftists have incomplete, self-contradictory theories about capitalism and social change. As a result their practice always tends towards the recuperation (or co-optation and reintegration) of social rebellion. Always with a focus on organization, leftists use a variety of tactics in their attempts to *reify* and *mediate* social struggles—representation and substitution, imposition of collectivist ideologies, collectivist moralism, and ultimately repressive violence in one form or another. Typically, leftists have employed all of these tactics in the most unrepentantly heavy-handed and explicitly authoritarian of ways. But these tactics (except for the last) can also be—and have often been—employed in more subtle, less-overtly authoritarian ways as well, the most important examples for our purposes being the historical and present practices of many (but not all) left anarchists.

Reification is often most generally described as "thingification." It's the reduction of a complex, living process to a frozen, dead or mechanical collection of objects or actions. Political mediation (a form of practical reification) is the attempt to intervene in conflicts as a third-party arbiter or representative. Ultimately these are the definitive characteristics of all leftist theory and practice. Leftism always involves the reification and mediation of social revolt, while consistent anarchists reject this reification of revolt. The formulation of post-left anarchy is an attempt to help make this rejection of the reification of revolt more consistent, widespread and self-aware than it already is.

Anarchy as a Theory & Critique of Organization

One of the most fundamental principles of anarchism is that social organization must serve free individuals and free groups, not vice versa. Anarchy cannot exist when individuals or social groups are dominated—whether that domination is facilitated and enforced by outside forces or by their own organization.

For anarchists the central strategy of would-be revolutionaries has been the non-mediating (anti-authoritarian, often informal or minimalist) self-organization of radicals (based on affinity and/or specific theoretical/practical activities) in order to encourage and participate in the self-organization of popular rebellion and insurrection against capital and state in all their forms. Even among most left anarchists there has always been at least some level of understanding that mediating organizations are at best highly unstable and unavoidably open to recuperation, requiring constant vigilance and struggle to avoid their complete recuperation.

But for all leftists (including left anarchists), on the other hand, the central strategy is always expressly focussed on creating mediating organizations between capital & state on the one side and the mass of disaffected, relatively powerless people on the other. Usually these organizations have been focussed on mediating between capitalists and workers or between the state and the working class. But many other mediations involving opposition to particular institutions or involving interventions among particular groups (social minorities, subgroups of the working class, etc.) have been common.

These mediating organizations have included political parties, syndicalist unions, mass political organizations, front groups, single-issue campaign groups, etc. Their goals are always to crystallize and congeal certain aspects of the more general social revolt into set forms of ideology and congruent forms of activity. The construction of formal, mediating organizations always and necessarily involves at least some levels of:

- **Reductionism** (Only particular aspects of the social struggle are included in these organizations. Other aspects are ignored, invalidated or repressed, leading to further and further compartmentalization of the struggle. Which in turn facilitates manipulation by elites and their eventual transformation into purely reformist lobbying societies with all generalized, radical critique emptied out.)

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- **Specialization or Professionalism** (Those most involved in the day-to-day operation of the organization are selected—or self-selected—to perform increasingly specialized roles within the organization, often leading to an official division between leaders and led, with gradations of power and influence introduced in the form of intermediary roles in the evolving organizational hierarchy.)
- **Substitutionism** (The formal organization increasingly becomes the focus of strategy and tactics rather than the people-in-revolt. In theory and practice, the organization tends to be progressively substituted for the people, the organization's leadership—especially if it has become formal—tends to substitute itself for the organization as a whole, and eventually a maximal leader often emerges who ends up embodying and controlling the organization.)
- **Ideology** (The organization becomes the primary subject of theory with individuals assigned roles to play, rather than people constructing their own self-theories. All but the most self-consciously anarchistic formal organizations tend to adapt some form of collectivist ideology, in which the social group at some level is acceded to have more political reality than the free individual. Wherever sovereignty lies, there lies political authority; if sovereignty is not dissolved into each and every person it always requires the subjugation of individuals to a group in some form.)

All anarchist theories of self-organization, on the contrary, call for (in various ways and with different emphases):

- **Individual and Group Autonomy with Free Initiative** (The autonomous individual is the fundamental basis of

In the end, the biggest difference is that anarchists advocate self-organization while leftists want to organize you. For leftists, the emphasis is always on recruiting to their organizations, so that you can adopt the role of a cadre serving their goals. They don't want to see you adopt your own self-determined theory and activities...Anarchists want you to determine your own theory and activity and self-organize your activity with like-minded others.

all genuinely anarchistic theories of organization, for without the autonomous individual, any other level of autonomy is impossible. Freedom of initiative is likewise fundamental for both individuals and groups. With no higher powers comes the ability and necessity for all decisions to be made at their point of immediate impact. As a side note, post-structuralists or postmodernists who deny the existence of the autonomous anarchist individual most often mistake the valid critique of the metaphysical subject to imply that even the process of lived subjectivity is a complete fiction—a self-deluded perspective which would make social theory impossible and unnecessary.)

- Free Association (Association is never free if it is forced. This means that people are free to associate with anyone in any combination they wish, and to dissociate or refuse association as well.)
- Refusal of Political Authority, and thus of Ideology (The word “anarchy” literally means no rule or no ruler. No rule and no ruler both mean there is no political authority above people themselves, who can and should make all of their own decisions however they see fit. Most forms of ideology function to legitimate the authority of one or another elite or institution to make decisions *for* people, or else they serve to delegitimize people's own decision-making for themselves.)
- Small, Simple, Informal, Transparent and Temporary Organization (Most anarchists agree that small face-to-face groups allow the most complete participation with the least amount of unnecessary specialization. The most simply structured and least complex organizations leave the least opportunity for the development of hierarchy and bureaucracy. Informal organization is the most

protean and most able to continually adapt itself to new conditions. Open and transparent organization is the most easily understood and controlled by its members. The longer organizations exist the more susceptible they usually become to the development of rigidity, specialization and eventually hierarchy. Organizations have life spans, and it is rare that any anarchist organization will be important enough that it should exist over generations.)

- Decentralized, Federal Organization with Direct Decision-Making and Respect for Minorities (When they are necessary larger, more complex and formal organizations can only remain self-manageable by their participants if they are decentralized and federal. When face-to-face groups—with the possibility for full participation and convivial discussion and decision-making—become impossible due to size, the best course is to decentralize the organization with many smaller groups in a federal structure. Or when smaller groups need to organize with peer groups to better address larger-scale problems, free federation is preferred—with absolute self-determination at every level beginning with the base. As long as groups remain of manageable size, assemblies of all concerned must be able to directly make decisions according to whatever methods they find agreeable. However, minorities can never be forced into agreement with majorities on the basis of any fictitious conception of group sovereignty. Anarchy is *not* direct democracy, though anarchists may certainly choose to use democratic methods of decision-making when and where they wish. The only real respect for minority opinions involves accepting that minorities have the same powers as majorities, requiring negotiation and the greatest level of mutual agreement for stable, effective group decision-making)

In the end, the biggest difference is that anarchists advocate self-organization while leftists want to organize you. For leftists, the emphasis is always on recruiting to their organizations, so that you can adopt the role of a cadre serving their goals. They don't want to see you adopt your own self-determined theory and activities because then you wouldn't be allowing them to manipulate you. Anarchists want you to determine your own theory and activity and self-organize your activity with like-minded others. Leftists want to create ideological, strategic and tactical unity through “self-discipline” (your self-repression) when possible, or organizational discipline (threat of sanctions) when necessary. Either way, you are expected to give up your autonomy to follow their heteronomous path that has already been marked out for you.

Anarchy as a Theory & Critique of Ideology

The anarchist critique of ideology dates from the work of Max Stirner, though he did not use the term himself to describe his critique. Ideology is the means by which alienation, domination and exploitation are all rationalized and justified through the deformation of human thought and communication. All ideology in essence involves the substitu-

tion of alien (or incomplete) concepts or images for human subjectivity. Ideologies are systems of false consciousness in which people no longer see themselves directly as subjects in their relation to their world. Instead they conceive of themselves in some manner as subordinate to one type or another of abstract entity or entities which are mistaken as the *real* subjects or actors in their world.

Whenever any system of ideas and duties is structured with an abstraction at its center—assigning people roles or duties for its own sake—such a system is always an ideology. All the various forms of ideology are structured around different abstractions, yet they all always serve the interests of hierarchical and alienating social structures, since they *are* hierarchy and alienation in the realm of thought and communication. Even if an ideology rhetorically opposes hierarchy or alienation in its content, its form still remains consistent with what is ostensibly being opposed, and this form will always tend to undermine the apparent content of the ideology. Whether the abstraction is God, the State, the Party, the Organization, Technology, the Family, Humanity, Peace, Ecology, Nature, Work, Love, or even Freedom; if it is conceived and presented as if it is an active subject with a being of its own which makes demands of us, then it is the center of an ideology. Capitalism, Individualism, Communism, Socialism, and Pacifism are each ideological in important respects as they are usually conceived. Religion and Morality are always ideological by their very definitions. Even resistance, revolution and anarchy often take on ideological dimensions when we are not careful to maintain a critical awareness of how we are thinking and what the actual purposes of our thoughts are. Ideology is nearly ubiquitous. From advertisements and commercials, to academic treatises and scientific studies, almost every aspect of contemporary thinking and communication is ideological, and its real meaning for human subjects is lost under layers of mystification and confusion.

Leftism, as the reification and mediation of social rebellion, is always ideological because it always demands that people conceive of themselves first of all in terms of their roles within and relationships to leftist organizations and oppressed groups, which are in turn considered more real than the individuals who combine to create them. For leftists history is never made by individuals, but rather by organizations, social groups, and—above all, for Marxists—social classes. Each major leftist organization usually molds its own ideological legitimation whose major points all members are expected to learn and defend, if not proselytize. To seriously criticize or question this ideology is always to risk expulsion from the organization.

Post-left anarchists reject all ideologies in favor of the individual and communal construction of self-theory. Individual self-theory is theory in which the integral individual-in-context (in all her or his relationships, with all her or his history, desires, and projects, etc.) is always the subjective center of perception, understanding and action. Communal self-theory is similarly based on the group as subject, but always with an underlying awareness of the individuals (and their own self-theories) which make up the group or organization. Non-ideological, anarchist organizations (or informal groups) are always explicitly based upon the autonomy of the individuals who construct them, quite unlike leftist organiza-



G8 Summit protest in Kananaskis, Canada this past June.

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tions which require the surrender of personal autonomy as a prerequisite for membership.

Neither God, nor Master, nor Moral Order: Anarchy as Critique of Morality and Moralism

The anarchist critique of morality also dates from Stirner's master work, *The Ego and Its Own* (1844). Morality is a system of reified values—abstract values which are taken out of any context, set in stone, and converted into unquestionable beliefs to be applied regardless of a person's actual desires, thoughts or goals, and regardless of the situation in which a person finds him- or herself. Moralism is the practice of not only reducing living values to reified morals, but of considering oneself better than others because one has subjected oneself to morality (self-righteousness), and of proselytizing for the adoption of morality as a tool of social change.

Often, when people's eyes are opened by scandals or disillusionment and they start to dig down under the surface of the ideologies and received ideas they have taken for

Neither God, Nor Master, Nor Moral Order

granted all their lives, the apparent coherence and power of the new answer they find (whether in religion, leftism or even anarchism) can lead them to believe that they have now found the Truth (with a capital 'T'). Once this begins to happen people too often turn onto the road of moralism, with its attendant problems of elitism and ideology. Once people succumb to the illusion that they have found the one Truth that would fix everything—if only enough other people also understood, the temptation is then to view this one Truth as the solution to the implied Problem around which everything must be theorized, which leads them to build an absolute value system in defense of their magic Solution to the Problem this Truth points them to. At this point moralism takes over the place of critical thinking.

The various forms of leftism encourage different types of morality and moralism, but most generally within leftism the Problem is that people are exploited by capitalists (or dominated by them, or alienated from society or from the productive process. etc.). The Truth is that the People need to take control of the Economy (and/or Society) into their own hands. The biggest Obstacle to this is the Ownership and Control of the Means of Production by the Capitalist Class backed up by its monopoly over the use of legalized violence through its control of the political State. To overcome this people must be approached with evangelical fervor to convince them to reject all aspects, ideas and values of Capitalism and adopt the culture, ideas and values of an idealized notion of the Working Class in order to take over

the Means of Production by breaking the power of the Capitalist Class and constituting the power of the Working Class (or its representative institutions, if not their Central Committees or its Supreme Leader) over all of Society.... This often leads to some form of Workerism (usually including the adoption of the dominant image of the culture of the working class, in other words, working-class lifestyles), a belief in (usually Scientific) Organizational Salvation, belief in the Science of (the inevitable victory of the Proletariat in) Class Struggle, etc. And therefore tactics consistent with building the fetishized One True Organization of the Working Class to contest for Economic and Political Power. An entire value system is built around a particular, highly oversimplified conception of the world, and moral categories of good and evil are substituted for critical evaluation in terms of individual and communal subjectivity.

The descent into moralism is never an automatic process. It is a tendency which naturally manifests itself whenever people start down the path of reified social critique. Morality always involves derailing the development of a consistent critical theory of self and society. It short-circuits the development of strategy and tactics appropriate for this critical theory, and encourages an emphasis on personal and collective salvation through living up to the ideals of this morality, by idealizing a culture or lifestyle as virtuous and sublime, while demonizing everything else as being either the temptations or perversions of evil. One inevitable emphasis then becomes the petty, continuous attempt to enforce the

boundaries of virtue and evil by policing the lives of anyone who claims to be a member of the in-group sect, while self-righteously denouncing out-groups. In the workerist milieu, for example, this means attacking anyone who doesn't sing paeans to the virtues of working class organization (and especially to the virtues of the One True form of Organization), or to the virtues of the dominant image of Working Class culture or lifestyles (whether it be beer drinking instead of drinking wine, rejecting hip subcultures, or driving a Ford or Chevy instead of BMWs or Volvos). The goal, of course, is to maintain the lines of inclusion and exclusion between the in-group and the out-group (the out-group being variously portrayed in highly industrialized countries as the Middle and Upper Classes, or the Petty Bourgeois and Bourgeois, or the Managers and Capitalists big and small).

Living up to morality means sacrificing certain desires and temptations (regardless of the actual situation you might find yourself in) in favor of the rewards of virtue. Don't ever eat meat. Don't ever drive SUVs. Don't ever work 9-5. Don't ever scab. Don't ever vote. Don't ever talk to a cop. Don't ever take money from the government. Don't ever pay taxes. Don't ever etc., etc. Not a very attractive way to go about living your life for anyone interested in critically thinking about the world and evaluating what to do for oneself.

Rejecting Morality involves constructing a critical theory of one's self and society (always self-critical, provisional and never totalistic) in which a clear goal of ending one's social alienation is never confused with reified partial goals. It involves emphasizing what people have to gain from radical critique and solidarity rather than what people must sacrifice or give up in order to live virtuous lives of politically correct morality.

Post-Left Anarchy: Neither Left, nor Right, but Autonomous

Post-left anarchy is not something new and different. It's neither a political program nor an ideology. It's not meant in any way to constitute some sort of faction or sect within the more general anarchist milieu. It's in no way an opening to the political right; the right and left have always had much more in common with each other than either has in common with anarchism. And it's certainly not intended as a new commodity in the already crowded marketplace of pseudo-radical ideas. It is simply intended as a restatement of the most fundamental and important anarchist positions within the context of a disintegrating international political left.

If we want to avoid being taken down with the wreckage of leftism as it crumbles, we need to fully, consciously and explicitly dissociate ourselves from its manifold failures—and especially from the invalid presuppositions of leftism which led to these failures. This doesn't mean that it's impossible for anarchists to also consider themselves leftists—there has been a long, most often honorable, history of anarchist and left syntheses. But it does mean that in our contemporary situation it is not possible for anyone—even left-anarchists—to avoid confronting the fact that the failures of leftism in practice require a complete critique of leftism and an explicit break with every aspect of leftism implicated in its failures.

Left anarchists can no longer avoid subjecting their own leftism to intensive critique. From this point on it is simply

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not sufficient (not that it really ever has been) to project all the failures of leftism onto the most explicitly obnoxious varieties and episodes of leftist practice, like Leninism, Trotskyism and Stalinism. The critiques of leftist statism and leftist party organization have always been only the tip of a critique that must now explicitly encompass the entire iceberg of leftism, including those aspects often long incorporated into the traditions of anarchist practice. Any refusal to broaden and deepen the criticism of leftism constitutes a refusal to engage in the self-examination necessary for genuine self-understanding. And stubborn avoidance of self-understanding can never be justified for anyone seeking radical social change.

We now have the unprecedented historical opportunity, along with a plenitude of critical means, to recreate an international anarchist movement that can stand on its own and bow to no other movements. All that remains is for all of us to take this opportunity to critically reformulate our anarchist theories and reinvent our anarchist practices in light of our most fundamental desires and goals.

Reject the reification of revolt. Leftism is dead! Long live anarchy!

Declaration of the Society Against Scientistic Obscurantism and Industrial Terrorism

The following text was written in support of René Riesel, accused of sabotaging GMO rice experiments at a French agricultural research agency (CIRAD) in Montpellier, France. Riesel participated in the May '68 events in Paris and was also a member of the Situationist International. Two others were also accused of the CIRAD action, including José Bové, the anti-globalisation activist. In a statement at the outset of the trial, Riesel dissociated himself from the reformist approach of Bové. A judgment in favour of the CIRAD went to appeal in December 2001. The text was published in the summer 2002 edition of *In Extremis, Bulletin de liaison et de critique anti-industrielle* (*Anti-industrial Liaison and Critique Bulletin*).

DECLARATION

Considering:

- that without fighting against the basis of the world that produces GMOs it is completely illusory to claim to oppose them, as do those adopting a supplicating citizenist-oriented approach which is respectful of the economy and the state;
- that media frenzy and confusion have until now managed (including even during the February 8 lower court trial) to prevent the radical refusal of genetic engineering *as such* from clearly standing out as the only serious reason for the sabotage at the CIRAD as well as other actions, known or covered up, which followed;
- the function, crucial in all aspects to this concealment, of the citizen-lobby, behind-the-times *progressives* who dream of seeing states and technoscience—globally integrated in the arsenal and *the interests* of domination—continue to watch over developments;
- that there is ~~no~~ need to await the conclusions of experts of any sort to know how disastrous “biotechnological” innovations are, when, in the form of chemical and nuclear poisoning of the planet, the consequences and cumulative results of less ambitious technologies are everywhere out of control, today and for centuries to come;
- that the science produced by industrial and commodity society has already contributed towards turning the planet’s nature into chaos and towards making humanity *non-adapted* to its own world;
- that what today claims to be acceptable scientific activity consists solely of gauging tolerance thresholds, of weakening them and acclimatising us, mentally and physiologically, to a truly inhospitable world, while mobilising all the resources of electronics and industrial chemistry, and this even before raising the *promises* of gene-splicing fantasies;
- that this scientistic pretension to control all of nature, humans and society manifestly results only in additional mutilations and aggravated disasters, and that the remaining function of this

mercenary science only tends to accustom us to all the catastrophes in the making and to equip the social order’s protectors—police, army, psychological support groups, etc.—against those individuals or populations who might be recalcitrant;

- that catastrophes are already present in sufficient numbers and have been for such a long time that it’s clear that unless adequate critical lucidity is directed at their *deeper causes*, these catastrophes will only bring more submission and the loss of the last shreds of autonomy, in other words the need and request for *protection*, dispensed solely by state power or with the help of its auxiliaries—citizen-lobbies and other “non-governmental” organisations;

Considering the reductionist atavism of modern science, its systematic neglect of consequences and its contempt for all non-scientific bodies of knowledge that have contributed towards humanisation *in all its forms* and which continue as best they can to oppose this artificialising extremism;

Considering that specialised science’s obliviousness perfectly corresponds to the historical unconsciousness of Political Economy, the other crucial element in the dominant ideology;

Considering as well that in light of the intrinsic vulnerability of the industrial system, of the planet-wide social disintegration it has produced and the



resulting chaos, we can expect the coming years to be a time of industrial terrorism and permanent war, under the aegis of the *Ministry of Fear*;

Considering, finally, that only by collectively exercising freedom of thought and critique will communities be formed which are in a position to practically oppose the material and intellectual ravages of this techno-industrial and commodity society;

• • •

The Society Against Scientific Obscurantism and Industrial Terrorism has as its goal, without neglecting the practical evaluation of the results of technoscientific activity, to immediately reach the stage of questioning its reductionist principles. This, however, should not be taken as an outright condemnation of western experimental science. But in so far as it has come to organise itself in an absolute and exclusive manner as the crucible of all knowledge, forbidding any internal or external evaluation, it represents in no uncertain terms the

dominant form of modern-day *obscurantism*.

In the name of freedom of thought and of choosing one's life and against the totalitarian oversocialisation being put in place, we will initiate a public discussion of these analyses on Thursday November 22, 2001 in Montpellier.

Translated by Bernard Cooper of the *Mauvaise Herbe* journal and Michael William. The original French version is on the web at: <http://netmc.9online.fr/VersusIndustriel/ScOSTI10.html>

Anarchist Modernism Revisited:

A Reply to Patrick Frank from Allan Antliff

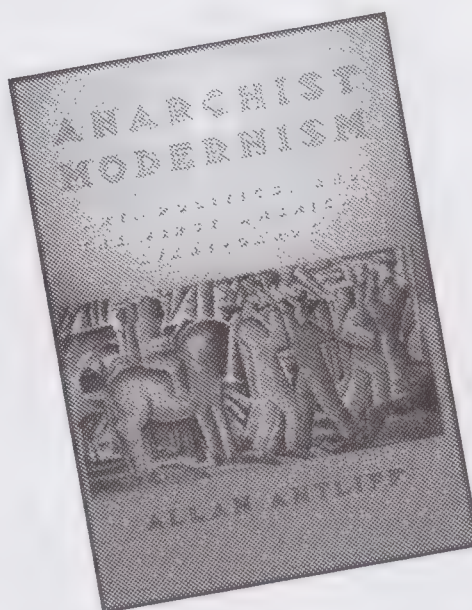
Writing history is a complex business. It is bound up with questions of methodology and interpretations which often throw an entirely new light on past eras. This places considerable demands on reviewers: they must be open-minded to new discoveries—otherwise they perpetuate the old and repress the new. With this in mind I want to address Patrick Frank's review of *Anarchist Modernism* in *Anarchy* #53 (Spring-Summer, 2002).

Let us cut to the chase. Among other subjects in *Anarchist Modernism* I write extensively about the anarchism of the painter and art teacher, Robert Henri. Frank spends most of his review contesting Henri's anarchism so as to 'prove' that *Anarchist Modernism* "inflates" anarchism's role in shaping modern art in early 20th century America. What then, is Frank's evidence that Henri wasn't an anarchist?

Frank acknowledges that Henri, "leader of a group of urban realists," taught a free art class from 1912 to 1918 at "the Ferrer School, an anarchist institution whose influence Antliff analyses thoroughly." He also agrees that Henri pioneered "a new kind of artists' society, in which any member who joined the group could exhibit his or her recent work"—though he does not acknowledge that I trace Henri's idea for egalitarian art exhibitions to his awareness of similar anarchist-inspired exhibitions in France. Finally, he notes that "throughout this discussion, Antliff never lets the reader forget that Henri was at times labelled an anarchist by his detractors." He then writes: "none of these facts necessarily makes Henri an anarchist, however."

Before we proceed further, there are some additional facts not mentioned by Frank:

In *Anarchist Modernism* I cite Emma Goldman (not a detractor), who knew Henri well and identified him as an anarchist. I cite her autobiography, *Living My Life*, where she wrote that Henri "was in fact an anarchist in his conception of art and its relationship to life." I also cite Henri's friend, Bayard Boyesen (not a detractor), who delivered a speech on the occasion of the opening of Henri's Ferrer Centre art class on March 18, 1912 in which he described Henri as an artist who stood "exactly where the philosophical anarchists stand."



Again I return to Emma Goldman, who went on a speaking tour in the spring of 1912 during which she delivered a talk called "Art and Revolution." In that talk she cited Henri, who had told her "the creative quality in man...can never assert itself at the command of the millionaire or the whim of the society matron or the cut and dried institutionalized art schools. True creative genius...can only be brought out by the growth of individuality and the fearless assertion of personality, or to be more explicit, in harmony and freedom." I go on to explain that "harmony and freedom" are terms encoding social reconstruction along the lines of anarchist-communism as expounded by Emma Goldman in *Anarchism and Other Essays*, a book which Henri himself described in his diary entry for January 30th, 1911 as "a great work by a great woman."

Shall I go on? Why not. After all, Frank has challenged me on this. I also cite a two-article attack on war and nationalism by Henri published in 1915 in a mass circulation socialist newspaper, *The Call*. In the first article, "Our Little Nationalism," Henri wrote that real artists were "rebels" and "universals" who had liberated themselves from the ties of family, nation, and race that make up "our little nationalism." In the second, "The War Machine," he declared his own "love of mankind" to be "individual, not national." There is much more I could cite from my book, but allow me to turn to two other scholars who have written on Henri's politics and art. First, William Innes Homer, author of the definitive biog-

raphy, *Robert Henri and His Circle*. Homer writes, "[Henri's] innate belief in the dignity and perfectibility of the individual man and in the evolution of an enlightened society through education paved the way for his acceptance of the theories of anarchism, which he embraced from the mid-nineties to his death in 1929." (180) Secondly, Paul Avrich, the preeminent historian of American anarchism. In *The Modern School Movement* Avrich writes: "Henri made no secret of his anarchist beliefs, though this is an aspect of his life that is not well known or understood. He was outraged by the American government's callous treatment of the Indians and by the attempt by Pinkertons to suppress the Homestead steel strike, in which his future comrade Berkman tried to assassinate Frick. In 1917 Henri was to serve on a committee to prevent the extradition to California of Alexander Berkman to face charges of complicity with Mooney and Billings in their famous bombing case in San Francisco. At the same time he championed other radical causes, from birth control to industrial unionism...[Henri] served on the advisory board of the Ferrer Association and donated paintings in support of the [Industrial Workers of the World] Lawrence strike of 1912." (147-148)

Enough. Let us return to our Robert Henri expert, Patrick Frank, and see what revelations he offers by way of refuting my assertion that Robert Henri was an anarchist. Remember, it is on this basis that he claims to have 'proved' *Anarchist Modernism* "inflates" the role of anarchism in shaping early American modernism. He writes, "Henri probably owed the most to Emerson, who taught that everyone should stand in a unique relation to the universe. There is a core of American Transcendentalism and Pragmatism in Henri's thought...Just because Henri was labelled an anarchist does not mean that he was one."

Homer, who first noted Henri's interest in Emerson, nonetheless identifies Henri as an anarchist. Avrich has written of various anarchists—notably Kropotkin—who incorporated Emerson's ideas into their political and philosophical outlook. But this is beside the point. My point is that Frank is merely asserting that Henri was not an anarchist, "probably." He offers not one shred of evidence to counter my analysis.

After this in-depth discussion of Henri Frank goes on to breezily assert that when I discuss the anarchism of this or that artist, critic or thinker I am "shooting myself in the foot." But on that score he is the one merrily shooting himself—over and over.

Take, for example, his additional claims that I "label" Leo Tolstoy and Oscar Wilde anarchists, implying that they weren't. Here is Wilde's reply to an interviewer in the spring of 1894 on the subject of his politics: "I am rather more than a Socialist. I am something of Anarchist." (Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, 290) Wilde's stance may come as a surprise to Frank, but then this is the same Wilde who wrote, in *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* (1891), "the form of government that is most suitable to the artist is no government at all."

As for Tolstoy, scholars routinely regard him as an anarchist for good reason. In 1900, in an article "On Anarchy," he wrote: "The anarchists are right in everything; in the negation of the existing order, and in the assertion that, without Authority, there could be no worse violence than that of Authority under existing conditions. They are mistaken only in thinking that Anarchy can be instituted by a revolution...it will be instituted only by there being more and more people who do not require the protection of government power, and by there being more and more people who will be ashamed of applying this power." (Leo Tolstoy, *Government is Violence: Essays on Anarchism and Pacifism*, 68) In sum, Tolstoy argued for a voluntaristic and peaceful transition to anarchism. He differentiated himself from "the anarchists" on that basis, not on a rejection of anarchism's political and social aims.

So much for Frank's scholarship—on to his misrepresentations. He ends his review on a derisive note, writing:

"[*Anarchist Modernism's*] conclusion blames the decline in anarchist influence after 1920 on official repression, as if the self-respecting anarchists who adopted those beliefs were frightened off by the government they professed to despise."

Here is what I write in the conclusion:

"Wartime repression, aided and abetted by 'patriotic' jingoism on a mass scale, did play its part in shutting down the circuit of radical institutions, publications, and activism that sustained anarchist modernism. However, as chronicled in chapter 9, the most fatal blow came from the rise of Bolshevik Marxism. I began this book citing Peter Blume's recollection that anarchism was the 'residue' of radicalism among Greenwich Village artists during the 1920s... A decade earlier Blume would have been drawn to a movement, not a disparate scattering of individuals. But by the early 1920s Bolshevism had vanquished anarchism, and with it, the political relevance of artistic innovation. This is why Blume characterized anarchism as a 'residue' rather than a moving force in the art scene." (*Anarchist Modernism*, 215)

As readers can see, I write that the rise of

Bolshevism vanquished anarchism. That is the key factor. I would urge Frank to reread both chapter 9 and the conclusion he skipped over so hastily to learn why.

Frank's misrepresentations are bad enough, but the most alarming feature of his review is his inability to grasp my methodology and thus to fathom the general thesis of my book. *Anarchist Modernism* deals with more than the art of avant-garde

In any event, I have demonstrated that the two most important partisans of modernism in the United States during the World War 1 era—Robert Henri and Alfred Steiglitz—promoted modernism in the name of anarchist values.

artists. It charts the evolution of period discourses about modernism as well as matters that go beyond the art object, namely, alternative exhibition spaces and teaching venues, radical publications, anarchist pedagogy, politicised art criticism, and, last but not least, the impact of World War 1 and the Russian revolution.

Frank, on the other hand, thinks the history of art is the history of individual artists, full stop. In an amusing—and telling—attempt to 'prove' the breath of my study is limited, he comes up with a laundry list of artists I have neglected. In *Anarchist Modernism* "no substantive mention is made" of "Arthur B. Davis, Ernest Lawson, Everett Shinn, John Martin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Marsden Hartley, Joseph Stella, or Charles Sheeler, all of whom were also important early modern American artists." This demonstrates I have left out "vast areas of artistic endeavour" and therefore "inflated" my thesis.

Interesting. Following this logic Noam Chomsky writing on, say, American imperialism and how it shaped the Gulf War, would be obligated to discuss the life and activities of every single soldier and politician involved, otherwise he "leaves out vast areas of creative endeavour." For that matter art historian Kenneth Silver, author of *Esprit de Corps, The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde* also has problem. Some years ago Silver won an internationally adjudicated book prize for his thesis that there was a rise in cultural nationalism among modernists in France between 1914 and 1924. However, to paraphrase Frank, in Silver's book "vast areas of artistic endeavour" fall by the wayside. "No substantial mention is made of, for example," Marcel Duchamp, Kees Van Dongen, Sonia Delaunay, Aristide Maillol, Constantine Brancusi, Jules

Pascin, Jacques Villon, or Chaim Soutine, "all of whom were also important [French] modernists." I offer this list to Frank gratis so that he may proclaim to the world that Silver's thesis is "inflated." In fact, I know of a veritable cascade of scholarship he could contest on similar grounds...which tells us more about the poverty of Frank's mind than the scholarship in question.

In any event, I have demonstrated that the two most important partisans of modernism in the United States during the World War 1 era—Robert Henri and Alfred Steiglitz—promoted modernism in the name of anarchist values. And, as every historian of American modernism knows, the careers of "Arthur B. Davis, Ernest Lawson, Everett Shinn, John Martin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Marsden Hartley, Joseph Stella, and Charles Sheeler"—to name a few—were profoundly indebted to the activities of Henri and Steiglitz. Thus Frank's claim that my findings have no bearing on these artists is disingenuous to begin with, even if we discount the limitations of his bean-counting "methodology."

Frank would have *Anarchy's* readers believe *Anarchist Modernism* has failed to "reset the boundaries of debate about the ideological development of American modern art." Others disagree. Here, for example, is what Jody Blake has to say in the journal *Modernism/Modernity*: "*Anarchist Modernism* transforms understanding of early twentieth-century American art." Frances DeVuono in the *New Art Examiner*: "Allan Antliff creates a needed historical revision of both anarchism and its attraction for artists during the era of World War 1." In *Les Cahiers du Musée du Art Moderne* Sandra Pursey writes that I have demonstrated anarchism "gave form and coherence to modern American art between 1908 and 1920." And in *Left History* Michael Thurston summarizes: "One of the most useful and impressive things about Allan Antliff's fine study of anarchism in American politics, culture, and art between 1908 and 1920 is the success with which it conveys precisely the multiple and creative aspects of anarchism...By this I do not mean simply to say that Antliff recovers the numerous subdivisions of early twentieth century anarchism... Much more importantly, Antliff's readings of the lives and works of such anarchists as Robert Henri, Emma Goldman, Max Weber, Man Ray, Adolf Wolff, Carl Zigrosser, Robert Minor, Rockwell Kent, Bayard Boyesen and Ananda Coomaraswamy show strikingly the ways in which anarchist principles were manifest in poems, essays, plays, paintings, sculptures, readymades, and those unclassifiable art works, human lives."

These reviews are as good a place as any to end my response to Frank, albeit with a final injunction—read *Anarchist Modernism*!

Have something to say? Write us!

We would like to encourage you to write us in order to continue this dialogue, whether you are sympathetic with or critical of anarchist theories and practices. All letters will be printed with the author's name, city and state or country only, unless it is specifically stated that her/his full address may be used, that only initials should be used, or that s/he wishes to remain completely anonymous. Writers are also invited to give e-mail addresses.

If necessary, we will edit letters that are redundant, overly long, unreadable, excessively boring, or contain death threats. (Ellipses in italicized brackets [...] indicate editorial omissions.) Limit length to three double-spaced, typewritten pages. Address your letters to C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA; or by e-mail: jmcquinn@coin.org

Prison zines

Dear Jason,

Greetings! I'd like to thank you for sending me a copy of *Anarchy* #52 which is a very nice issue. I also appreciate the reviews of some of the zines I publish and write. I even agree with your critiques mostly. The piece "A Call to Humanity" by Talib Y. Rasheed/Clarence Anthony Taylor was not part of Ron Campbell's zine *Constipation* #10, though. It must have gotten mixed in the pages or something. I don't claim it's anarchist.

I don't agree with a lot of things I end up publishing, which may seem odd. Let me explain my reasoning. I have taken it upon myself to create a far-flung zine distro specializing in working closely with conscious prisoners. Happily, some of these people are articulate anarchists, but others are not, but I still appreciate the subjects they cover and their writing ability. As so little writing by prisoners is available to us in the "outs" or to other prisoners, I see the value of publishing work that is not lucidly anarchist. It means a lot to the brothers and sisters caged in the same gulag (or state) as the author. Plus it starts a chain reaction. Other prisoners write to me, requesting other prisoner zines—and anarchist zines. Some send artwork, poetry or articles, along with their bare-their-souls letters. For they trust me like a parent. They know I'm on their side and they begin to listen to me.

Some develop into talented anarchist writers or maybe they already are anarchists and now they've found a forum to express themselves and are inspired to set to work. I work with new Afrikans who may never become anarchists but now have an understanding of where we're coming from and have a respectful working relationship with one—me!

I'll be the first to admit that I'm shallow as far as theoretical knowledge of anarchist philosophy is concerned. I've a lot to learn. But I do have a blunt plain-spokenness and outrage and love for humanity that many prisoners (and others) have come to respect.

You have to crawl before you can walk, much less run and people need all the little encouraging hand-holding and kitty steps to blossom into serious anarchist thinkers. I learn a helluva lot from them, too. It's a tough arena to work in—a gut-wrenching roller coaster of a ride where my beloved collaborators are slammed into the hole, kidnapped and transferred, beaten and humiliated—even murdered!—for their courageous advocacy work, expressed at the most striving level of consciousness they are then capable of, amidst such a crowded, psychotic and dangerous netherworld prison environment.

Is there posing, contradictions, even stupid points being made by some of these people? Of course, but I'm not going to censor or edit or moralize about it after their piece. I'll either

accept it or I won't. I have my own zine (*Thought Bombs*) where I can say what I want, but I also include pieces I may not fully agree with in these, as well.

As for my work with STAND (Shut This Airport Nightmare Down) I'll say this. I co-founded this grassroots citizens' group and am secretary/editor. From 300 members, we are now 2,400 households of working-class citizens, including many farmers. Now farmland is an assault on nature & many farmers use fertilizer/pesticides, etc. But, the alternative the state proposes—eviction, concrete, asphalt, pollution, congestion, politically-connected urban sprawl is way worse. As America goes this area is pristine, with a lot of wildlife, etc. I live out here & I'll be damned if I let my neighbors & these communities go down without one helluva fight by me. I get much more assistance from these political neophytes who appreciate my efforts fighting this fuckin' airport than I do from any anarchists, whether they know what they're talking about or not.

Plus, these farmers know a lot of things about a lot of things that I never would have found out about otherwise. There's no green anarchists out here—we're the ones articulating the arguments in defense of nature, for our communities and against wasting our precious resources to destroy this area so some smarmy mob-tied construction companies, land speculators, & political pigs can make a killing out here. It's the big issue out here. I'd be a bullshit anarchist if I *wasn't* involved—and heavily!

Anyway, I think you do splendid work, learn a lot, agree with most of it and envy your position—being able to collaborate with serious, thinking anarchists putting out such a quality publication. I don't have that luxury—although I do collaborate with some excellent anarchists (if I trek to the city). But I always have my prisoner brothers and sisters, right here by me.

Anthony Rayson
27009 S Egyptian Trail
Monee, IL 60449

Whiteboy worries

Can we get off what happened in Spain in the thirties, what kind of asshole Murray is, nostalgia for "the May events" and what happened in prehistoric time to ask "Why are there very few blacks, browns, reds and yellows in the anarchist movement right now? (2002)"

Whiteboy
Marina Del Rey, CA

Surrealism is dead, the SI is dead

Dear *Anarchy*,

Because in 1993 we published, here in Italy, Vaneigem's book about surrealism, we have read with some interest the letter of Don LaCoss and Alex Trotter's answer in your last issue (#52). We published Vaneigem's book because we think that his criticism of surrealism is good in many points. In our introduction we wrote that Vaneigem was able to recognize the merits and the limits of surrealism. Using the pseudonym of Jules-Francois Dupuis—one of the men who signed Isidore Ducasse's (aka Lautréamont's) death certificate—he wanted to state the death of surrealism as a revolutionary movement. And we agree with him: the subversive force of surrealism died when "the Surrealist Revolution" degenerated into "Surrealism in the service of Revolution." In other words, when surrealism joined the Communist Party, revealing by this act its practical impotence. After the early years, the merits of surrealism are basically the merits of individual surrealists. Unfortunately Péret was just one surrealist: he was not the surrealist movement. But this doesn't mean that surrealism is without interest. We think that surrealism is very rich, but the richness of surrealism consists in its defeats (what everyone has forgotten about it), and not in its successes (what everyone remembers about it). So we also think that one must look at surrealism, as Trotter says, with "a cold eye."

But in our introduction we wrote something else. We wrote

that Vaneigem was a skillful anatomist (of surrealism), but he was also skillful to avoid placing on the anatomy table his own corpse, the Situationist International. We think that if LaCoss looks at surrealism with a too warm eye (sad to say, but a reading of *L'Archibras* really shows the surrealists' infatuation for the Cuban regime), Trotter looks at the Situationist International with a hot eye. The International Situationist didn't go beyond surrealism, the IS just protracted it. The limits of surrealism are the limits of the IS. But what about the merits? Trotter says that the situationists had a more trenchant political understanding than the surrealists. Yes, it's true. Paradoxically, for us, this is exactly the reason why we think that surrealists are more interesting than situationists. Because it's very easy to see all the contradictions of surrealism, its inconsistency. Surrealists were enemies of work, of the army, of police, but they loved Trotsky, who supported the militarization of work, founded the Red Army, destroyed Kronstadt's uprising. Surrealists hated every rationalism, every logic, but they followed "scientific Marxism." There are many examples of surrealism's inconsistency. This confusion, as Breton once said, derived from the illusions of the Russian Revolution. This revolution worked as a mirror decoy for larks. Even many anarchists fell for this illusion (Victor Serge, for example). Lacking "political understanding," the surrealists made their big mistake: they thought that in order to realize the surrealist project, they needed to join the Party. But their original project was close to anarchism, a libertarian project (here in Europe the word "libertarian" has a different meaning than in the US). How can the surrealist project, Trotter asks, "coexist with the heavily workerist and authoritarian economic development ideologies of Lenin, Trotsky, or Guevara?" The answer is simple: it doesn't coexist. This is the reason for surrealist inconsistency. So basically surrealists were libertarians who used a



French high school graffiti in 1969: "Don't say: Mister Professor. Say: Strike Bitch!"

Marxist language. Today this confusion is so clear, that it's easy to throw out the bathwater and keep the baby.

But what about the IS? The IS was surrealism's opposite. Situationists were Marxists who also used a libertarian language. When Marxists want to put a touch of life into their decrepit ideology, they always look to anarchism (you know very well mister Murray Bookchin). So, for example, situationists talked about the "revolutionary festival" without saying that this idea was already present in Bakunin. Trotter mocks surrealists for their love affair with Trotsky. But in France, in the past, the revolutionary left was deeply influenced by Trotsky. The group *Socialisme ou Barbarie* was born from a split of the 4th International. In his history of the IS, Jean-Francois Martos (who was a friend of Debord) calls the young lettrists "anarcho-Trotskyists." In his most famous book, that you know as *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, Vaneigem says that "The Red Army of 1917 was a new kind of organization" in order to point out what he believes to be one original solution of the Russian Revolution. Trotter says that "there may have been better excuses for being a Trotskyist in the 1930s

than there are today." Maybe. Anyway, we are sure that there have been better excuses—for some artists with a radical itch as surrealists and situationists were—for being a Trotskyist in the 1930s that there have been in the 1950s. It's much too easy to call Trotsky "the butcher of Kronstadt" in 1970, as Vaneigem did. It was not so easy call the Russian Revolution "a vague ministerial crisis," or a "mediocre regime" based "on the easy and repugnant order of work, like the capitalist regime," in 1925, as Aragon and Eluard did (a long time before becoming Stalinists).

With all their "political understanding," situationists didn't avoid supporting technology. Trotter forgets to say that the IS was a great supporter of industrial civilization. The main situationist argument against surrealism was exactly this. Debord mocked Breton because surrealism was against machines, against technology. Do you know all this? Do you know what situationists said about "industry, destined to free men from work through machines," or about "science, destined to free them historically and rationally from nature"? In his last years, Debord changed his ideas about technology. Vaneigem hasn't. He still believes in the

liberating force of science. Do you know that situationists supported for some years "infiltration" as a method of action? We really hope LaCoss is joking when he says that "so many anarchists are looking for some postsituationist variant of action." What were situationists' actions? Movies? Paintings? Or scandal? But scandal was an old surrealist weapon. Scandal was an old dadaist weapon. Scandal was an old futurist weapon. Scandal was an old anarchist weapon. So, it's better to look for some anarchist variant of action.

Trotter says that if surrealists "tried to place themselves in the service of political vanguards, they also remained attached to works of visual art and written poetry and literature as specialized activities that have found their home principally in galleries, museums, and academe." We agree with him, but this happened also to situationists. We are sorry but we have bad news for Trotter. Jorn's paintings are in many galleries and museums. Pinot-Gallizio's paintings are in many galleries and museums. The Beaubourg, the bigger french cultural institution, organized an art exhibition about the IS more than ten years ago. In the last Festival of Cinema of Venice there was a

"tribute to Guy Debord," with the projection of all his movies. And what about the situationists? Some years before his death, Guy Debord sold his books to Gallimard (the same Gallimard who was so hated by situationists). Vaneigem prostitutes his literary talent for any publishing house. Michele Bernstein works as movie journalist for the leftist daily *Libération*. René Viénet went to China where he supervised the industrial business relations between France and China (among these industrial businesses, the nuclear one).

Surrealism is dead. The Situationist International is dead. Their past is just an arsenal. Breton hoped that future generations will pillage surrealism. Debord was just obsessed with the public recognition of his services. We must look inside this arsenal with a cold eye. But if the original surrealist project was close to anarchism (because the notion of the Marvelous calls to mind the anarchist Utopia, the "impossible" of Bakunin, the "Unknown" of Coeurderoy), we can't say the same thing for the situationist project.

Gratis,
c/o M.G. Scopetta
C.P. 1 301
10100 Torino
Italy

More alien non-evidence

Dear Jason,

Thank you for the direly needed cogent arguments of "Stop the War!" in "Openers" section, *Anarchy* #52, which demonstrate that the state perpetrates at least 99.999% of all terrorist attacks (i.e., the killing of noncombatant humans) on planet Earth.

My response to your "No Thanks for the ET Offer" which appeared in the letters section of *Anarchy* #50 and your "smoking gun" demand to be shown the nuts and bolts of "the wreckage of an alien spacecraft entombed in the earliest Egyptian pyramid" in order to be convinced "that aliens have landed on Earth and affected human society" and thus allowing anarcho-ufology to

exist as "anything useful to say to the vast majority of us," is: I claim that the lack of evidence of reports of human retrievals of alien spacecraft wreckage, circa 3100 B.C., is not necessarily lack of evidence of alien visitations to Earth for the following hypothesized reason. ET gods concealed (via camouflage, e.g., hologram induced optical illusions) their high tech instruments and machinery (e.g., functioning, onboard spacecraft instruments and ET retrieved spacecraft wreckage) from the close-up view of prehistoric humans and the slaves, artisans, engineers, priests and god-kings (i.e. virtually everyone) of the earliest ancient cities and their successors in order to prevent human artistry and engineering from depicting high tech apparatuses via painting, drawing, engraving, sculpturing, chronicling or monumentalizing same, anywhere in general, or on cave walls or within and around the walled precincts of ancient cities, in particular. [Although "Paleolithic UFO Shapes" on the walls of the famous les Eyzies, Lascaux, and Altamira caves in France and Spain and "Pakal: The Ancient Maya Astronaut" may have slipped through the cracks of this *Alien High Tech Depiction Prevention Program*. (For "Paleolithic UFO Shapes" see Aimé Michel in the *British Flying Saucer Review*, Vol. 15, No. 6. For "Pakal" see Joan d'Arc's *Space Travelers and the Genesis of the Human Form*, 2000, front cover and p.182)]. Lasting, detailed and accurate prehistoric and ancient depictions of ET high tech would have provided the basis for the common belief among contemporary modern humans that the state and civilization (and their necessary attendant global ecocide) were created by the ETs—the same "time dilated" ET Gods of antiquity who are allegedly abducting humans today and indoctrinating them into believing that they, the ETs, are our ecological saviors from our "self-induced" ecocide. Thus, ET gods failing to retrieve their crashed spacecraft wreckage and allowing Magdalenian artists and ancient chroniclers, iconographers and monumental-

izers an uncamouflaged close-up view of high tech instruments and conveyances, would have led to a contradiction that would have completely compromised the ETs' *Alien/Human Hybrid/Ecological Project* (A/HH/EP) which is being reported more and more frequently today by alleged abductees to scientific researchers of the UFO abduction phenomenon. [Note: Out of all the humanoid life-forms in the Universe that have revealed themselves to a significant number of alleged UFO abductees (who report to scientific researchers what they have seen), the Homo sapien ETs (i.e., blonde and dark haired "Nordics") are reported to be at the supreme head of a chain of command over all the other humanoid ETs (e.g., "greys," "simians," "reptilians," "insectoids" etc.) Moreover, it is reported by the alleged UFO abductees that the aliens are creating "alien/human hybrids" from abductees' sperm and eggs via gene splicing, artificial insemination, fetus incubation and bionic engineering. This (i.e., Homo sapien ETs at the supreme head of a humanoid ET chain of command which is steeped in the genetic and bionic engineering of Homo sapien Earthlings) plus compelling morphological evidence make it clear that out of all the humanoid ET candidates (e.g., "Nordic" Homo sapiens, "greys," "simians," "reptilians," "insectoids" etc.) who have revealed themselves to alleged UFO abductees, the Homo sapien ET is the natural, non-genetically and non-bionically engineered predecessor, precursor and genetic and bionic engineer of all the other humanoid ETs.

Thus; state, civilization, genetic and bionic engineering and interstellar space flight emerged uniquely (on some planet(s) other than Earth) from Homo sapien, the "highest" life-form in the Universe. A Homo sapien state (or states) rules the Milky Way galaxy. Thus, Homo sapien ETs create sterile, emotionless, necessary specialist (for expeditionary spaceflight), cyborg, android, ET, "greys," "simians," "rep-

toids," "insectoids" etc. from the sperm, eggs and fetuses of Homo sapien Earthling abductees. Homo sapien ETs genetically engineer and bionically modify Homo sapien Earthlings into ET "greys," "simians," "reptoids," "insectoids" etc., who are, therefore, our android children—sacrificed to the ET Homo sapien command to spread state, civilization, genobionic genocide and ecocide throughout the Universe. Hence, needless to say, the A/HH/EP is a misnomer.] (For A/HH/EP, see *Passport to the Cosmos: Human Transformation and Alien Encounters* by Pulitzer prize-winning Harvard psychiatrist John E. Mack, 1999. Mack gives a report here of the A/HH/EP and he suggests further that the state and civilization emerged from symbolist crazed, shaman abductees of UFOs from an "ecologically minded spirit realm"!?). Assuming the existence of A/HH/EP, it is extremely unlikely that the aliens would have allowed it to be compromised by the modern human awareness of "the wreckage of an alien spacecraft entombed in the earliest Egyptian pyramid." Thus, the existence of an alien ecological project for modern human Earthlings validates the existence of an alien high tech depiction prevention program for prehistoric and ancient human Earthlings, and conversely. (See technological secrets of the citadel in *The City in History* by Lewis Mumford, pp.99, 100, 101).

In addition to significant hard evidence of which limited space precludes presentation here as in the last issue of *Anarchy*, there exists significant archeological, historical, psychological and anthropological evidence "that aliens have landed on Earth and affected human society" as follows: Whitley Strieber attributes "the evolution of culture" to the UFO encounter.

"...One is left to wonder if there might not have been a very real technology behind the miracles and apparitions that have done so much to influence the growth of our cultures. Indeed, viewed from this perspective, it can be vigorously argued

that most major religions have emerged out of visionary experiences that are, in fact, understandable in the setting of the UFO encounter. Thus the phenomenon becomes not simply one of a group of things that influence the evolution of culture, but rather a primary engine." (*Dimensions* by Jacques Vallee, forward by Whitley Strieber, p. viii) (emphasis added).

John Zerzan, who was the first to identify asphyxiating, symbolist crazed, modern culture; traces its origin to proto-Neolithic and proto-urban shamans.

"...Ritual authority structures play an important part in the organization of production (division of labor) and actively further the coming of domestication. Symbolic categories are set up to control the wild and alien...."

"Out of ritual action arose the shaman who was not only the first specialist...but the first cultural practitioner in general. The earliest art was accomplished by shamans, as they assumed ideological leadership and designed the content of rituals...This original specialist became the regulator of group emotions...Centralized authority, and most likely religion too, grew out of the elevated position of the shaman. The specter of social complexity was incarnated in this individual who wielded symbolic power. Every headman and chief developed from the primacy of this figure..." ("Running on Emptiness" by John Zerzan in *Anarchy*, Spring-Summer, 1997, p.34).

John Mack, corroboratively and independently of Strieber (UFO) and Zerzan (shaman), traces the origin of state and civilization to the symbolist crazed, shaman abductee of UFOs.

"...But when we consider the nature of the [UFO abduction] phenomenon, it should not surprise us that the experiencers are drawn to archetypal symbols or shamanic themes and consciousness...Encounters with humanoid beings [i.e., alien UFO abduction encounters] can bring some shamans to a level of consciousness that is trans-

tribal." (*Passport to the Cosmos* by John Mack; chap. 7 "Shamans, Symbols, and Archetypes," pp. 135, 136, 155).

And finally, in a research thesis for his MA degree in Religious Studies at Edith

beings" who abduct the experiencer "to a strange, otherworldly location" where they are "traumatized" by altered states of consciousness that "involve illness, symbolic animal imagery, and various spiritual

their ancestors or even the creators and guardians of the human race. A dominant theme running through their abductions is the profound interest in *genetics* possessed by the entities they encounter. This has its counterpart in some shamanic creation myths, drawings and carvings of intertwined or twin-headed snakes [see anthropologist Jeremy Narby's book *The Cosmic Serpent: DNA and the Origins of Knowledge* (1998), London: Victor Gollancz] (emphasis added)....

"...These numerous similarities are not superficial or coincidental and provide powerful confirmation for the anecdotal claims of such similarities between shamanic and abduction experiences made by some ufologists." (See Mufon *UFO Journal*, August 2001, p.3 and 4)

In conclusion, I submit that the aforementioned correlative scientific research reports of Strieber, Zerzan, Mack, Wilson *et al* constitute significant corroborating circumstantial evidence that the state (i.e. kingship) and its byproduct civilization emerged from UFO abducted shamans and "that [Homo sapien] aliens have landed on Earth and affected human society."

David G. Pearson
15A Jason St, Apt 4A
Arlington, MA 02476

"Zerzan...is a mystic"

Dear Jason,

The new issue (#52) is good though I recommend people immediately follow reading Zerzan's article with your reply to goofy anarcho-UFOlogist David Pearson's letter.

Zerzan contends that language and art are dominating and ancient egalitarian gatherer-hunters did without. Don't modern hunter-gatherers talk to each other? Don't we believe, with Orwell, that limited vocabulary correlates to a limited ability to think? Doesn't Chomsky say that grammar (language) is likely hardwired into the brain?

Zerzan says that pre-language gatherer-hunters were telepathic. One wonders how, to quote you, Jason, "without any believ-



Joke cover for *Anarchy* magazine #9, adapted for a local Missouri readership from the original art work by Clifford Harper.

Cowan University in Perth, Australia entitled, "Shamanism and Alien Abductions: A Comparative Study," Simon Harvey Wilson, Mufon State Director for W. Australia, has documented that *Passport to the Cosmos* by John Mack, *The Omega Project* (1992) by Kenneth Ring and *UFO Abduction Reports: The Supernatural Kidnap Narrative Returns in Technological Guise* (1989) by Thomas Bullard have disclosed significant "similarities between abduction narratives and shamanic initiation experiences from around the world." Involved in both types of experience are "unearthly

entities." Both the UFO and shamanic initiation abduction experiences invariably instill in the abductees an animistic world view which expresses an intense concern for animals and "environmental matters." The abductees' experiences take them to a realm of reality that other members of their community are unable to understand or access. For this reason, the shaman is held in especially high esteem by his/her society. Wilson concludes,

"As in shamanism, the abductees encounter a variety of beings, some of whom they feel are related to them, may be

able evidence [where] there is no plausible reason for anyone to believe such things have happened," Zerzan could patch his holey dogma with that crap. "But when one begins to assume that such events happened and look for any tiny shred of evidence which is then blown out of proportion to prove something, this type of speculation becomes a symptom of an unbalanced mind...."

Are you hearing voices, John Zerzan?

As for art being dominating, Tom Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (among others) cogently makes that point. But Zerzan says that art is dominating because it prefigures division of labor. Non-uniformity of skill level is apparent in all aspects of human activity. John draws better than Dave so he gets the cave space. Dave draws in the dirt. Dave chips obsidian better than John—nobody wants to skin a mammoth with John's knives (even John). Jason is a sabretoothed tiger in the sack, he gets all the guys/girls. Are chert chipping, tuber gathering, in fact every human activity, also precursor of the division of labor?

So art caused the division of labor and I am dominated by language which is a fundamental component of my mind. You know, the need to take a shit dominates me every morning; the need to breathe every few seconds. See, when I think of division of labor I think Adam Smith's pins—I think Frederick Taylorism but not the fact that Picasso really could draw and I really couldn't. I would think that domination requires an outside force and would exclude inherent functions of the body and mind.

Zerzan confuses the religion of animism with equality and bemoans the lack of synonymous terms in the English language (there is a laughable contradiction here). John—animism is a sort of religion. I'm not sure if it always involves telepathy (you could tell us) but it does require a Shaman.

Zerzan, the millenarian, is a mystic. He compares "pre-symbolic" culture to Adam and Eve in the Garden and the advent of

language to Original Sin and the Fall. Like other '60s burn-outs "he gots to get himself back to the Gar-ar-ar-ar-dennnnn!" He says the proto-anarchist, pre-symbolic, gatherer-hunters (I would refer to

labor—no wait, it was space aliens who did it all—why do you think its called alienation?)

I suspect that Zerzan is attempting to reconcile the goddess/nature worship prevalent amongst New Agers with anar-

life goes on, the degradation of the arts will go on; and if that system is to last forever then art is doomed, and will surely die, that is to say, civilization will die."

-William Morris, "Art under Plutocracy"

Capitalism Forever = end of art and civilization.

Zerzan's hidden agenda?

Down with the Cult of the Caveman!

David Orso

wilyquixote@wheelweb.com

Just quality

Folks at c.a.l. press,

i received #53 today as the first of an 8-issue subscription. the artwork on the back cover is sweet. i'm looking forward to reading through it. i've only read one other issue (#52) but from what i've seen, this is a really good journal. i'm rather new to anarchism as a theory but kind of feel like i've pretty much always been one by temperament but just didn't know it (i'm 51). i am enjoying reading various writings from proudhon and bakunin, to debord, vaneigem, zerzan, david watson, fredy perlmutter, hakim bey, etc. etc. it was watching the anarchist video of the seattle anti-w.t.o. ruckus on free-speech t.v. that first drew my attention to the anarchist effort. i still like to watch that video even after having seen it several times. anyway, i just wanted to thank you folks for doing the work you're doing with this journal. it's quality.

sincerely,

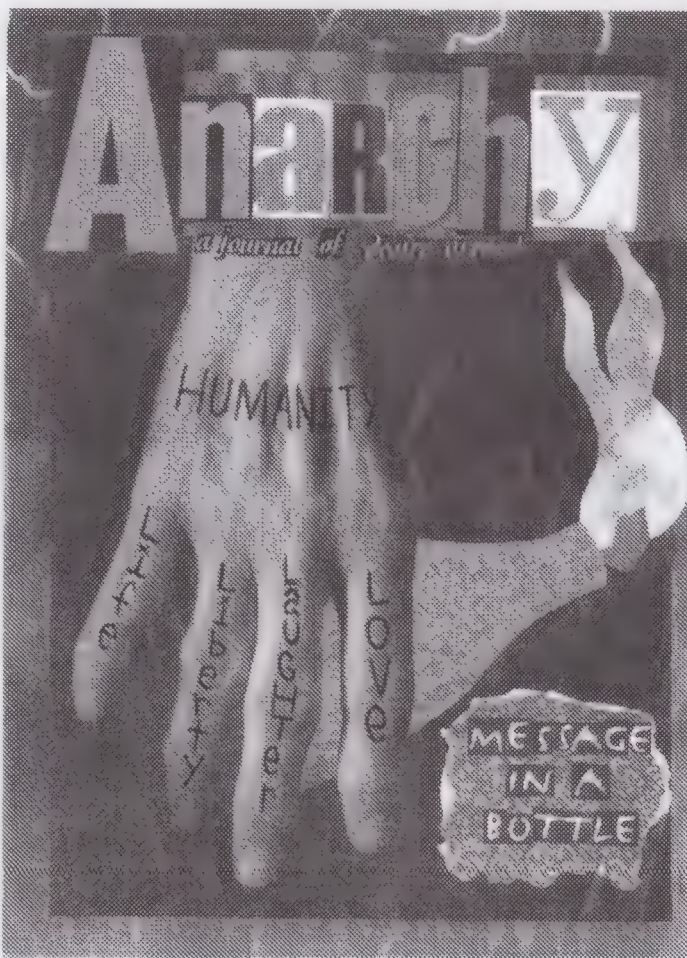
david ledbetter

sloopist@yahoo.com

Primitive false impression

No doubt some primitivists romanticize primitives to some extent, but in correcting their errors, anthropologist Harold Barclay, with less excuse, has made some of his own.

All societies "have their leaders," and while this is true, Dr. Barclay leaves the false impression, by his examples, that in all societies there exist recognized categories of *experts in leadership* (the old men, the great men, the headmen, etc.). That is



Mock *Anarchy* magazine cover by F.W. Flores.

them as "imaginary friends") couldn't talk but could read minds (not much to read, ha ha, but Zerzan assures us they have high I.Q.s—I.Q.s?!) and that animism is good because nobody worshipped rocks or trees—they just regarded them as equals. But, if cave people read minds and considered rocks to be their equals, then they must have read rocks' minds and the rocks must have read their minds. This is mysticism even if it isn't nonsense. But it is nonsense, too. (In fact, it was the narcissism of the caves and their demand for decoration that caused art, domination, alienation, and the division of

chism which is fine and, as religion is likely to comfort and corrupt many. He does this to pander to his natural constituency at the expense, only, of his credibility.

So, I guess my question is—if David Pearson, goofy UFOlogico-anarchist is a goofball, why is wordy telepath John Zerzan a guiding light of so-called post left anarchism? Do religion and *Anarchy* mix? One thinks of Dorothy Day, though clearly John Zerzan wears his sphincter as a necklace. He is a potential new LaRouche.

"So long as the system of competition in the production and exchange of the means of

not so. The San (Bushman) and the Pygmies, for instance, have no headmen; leadership (or rather, leading) is *ad hoc* and unspecialized.

The claim that sexual inequality is universal is also false. Only the sexual division of labor is universal, and it cannot be that women are always assigned the worse work, because, nursing aside there is no type of work done by women in some societies which is not done by men in others (Anne Oakley, *Women's Work*). Nor do women always do more work; among the San, the men work more (but not very much in either case). As the difference feminists insist, different does not mean unequal.

Whether or not hunter-gatherers meet some standard of equality which Dr. Barclay has not provided, theirs is, according to anthropologist James Woodburn, "the closest approximation to equality known in human societies." The anthropologist who studied the foraging Paliyans, Peter M. Gardner, says that they do not achieve perfect equality, "but they come closer to doing so than most social philosophers dream of." That is only one of the respects in which foragers merit our interest and admiration.

Some *Anarchy* "commentator" reportedly suggested that pastoralists may exemplify stateless organization. As a generalization, that's wrong, and Dr. Barclay set him straight. But if "the great majority of pastoral societies have either quasi or full state structures," he has a very evasive way of showing it. Anarchist foragers "are limited to parts of Sub-Saharan Africa" (which parts?) and the Arctic, making it sound like statist or protostatist herders are found everywhere else. Not every reader knows that there were no pastoral nomads of any kind in Australia or in pre-contact North and South America. Never mind where they are, how many pastoral societies are anarchist and how many are not?

If the great majority of herders are non-anarchist, nearly all herders outside sub-Saharan Africa must be non-anarchist to

offset the African and Arctic anarchists. But that's not what Dr. Barclay wrote in *People Without Government*. There he stated that except for band societies like the Lapps, herders have the tribal form or organization, adding: "But in many cases this has evolved into a kind of incipient state structure with distinct social classes and a military organization which undertakes true warfare." So now many pastoral societies have *incipient* state structures, i.e., strictly speaking, *none* of them are statist (which is not true, actually). And here he says "many," not "the great majority," and that's before subtracting the African and Arctic societies. For all we know, many pastoral societies are anarchist; that would not contradict anything in the book.

I am used to patiently tormenting semi-literate traditional anarchists like Murray Bookchin for the opportunistic way they ransack libraries for scraps of fact to decorate their dogmatics. I try to make sure they get away with nothing. I should not have to do it to a professional scholar and presumably an anarchist.

Bob Black
POB 3142
Albany, NY 12203-0142

Rob los Ricos Enterprises

Over the past 3 years of my prison experience, friends, supporters, well-wishers and comrades have been very generous to me, sending donations, books, zines, cards and letters. Thank you all very much for thinking of me, it means a lot.

The Oregon Department of Corrections makes it difficult to send literature and monetary donations to prisoners, so a friend offered to start a bank account for me in Eugene. The only way this seems to work for all parties involved is to start a business account in my name, so that's what we've done.

Having one address for people to send donations my way seems like the easiest way for me to manage my personal affairs, so that I have one place and person to contact when I want to order a book, subscribe to a magazine, order new glass-

es, replace my worn out running shoes, send money to my daughter's mother or to send my daughter a gift. (Her birthday is coming up soon.)

In the future, this business account may come in handy for helping me produce publications and otherwise conduct business with the outside world. Of course, I'll let ya'll know when such developments arise.

Thanks again for your support. It's made a really horrible situation somewhat more bearable.

Send donations to: Rob los Ricos, PO Box 50634, Eugene OR 97405.

In Revolt,
Rob Thaxton #12112716
OSP
2605 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

An "Unbridgeable" platformist "chasm"

Dear Jason,

This letter is a reply to the editorial in issue #53 of *Anarchy* ("Anarchist Diversity vs. Monolithic Anarchism"). As one of those platformists supposedly looking to "constitute themselves as the next generation of radical leadership" who I assume this essay was directed at, I take exception to these unfounded accusations and sectarian fantasies.

It may come as a surprise to you, but those of us anarchists who have been critically influenced by platformist ideas and methods of organization fully agree with you that there will never be a unified anarchist milieu and, ultimately, this is probably a good thing! This was the basic crux of the arguments against "synthesism" presented by anarchist militants from the Dielo Truda group (Makhno, Arshinov, Mett, etc.) in their controversial "Organizational Platform of Libertarian Communists." Whereas "synthesists" like Voline and Faure argued for a monolithic movement of divergent, and often contradictory, conceptions of anarchism, the "platformists" advocated for a necessary rupture with the movement, offering a constructive rallying point for those who identified with pro-organization-

al, class struggle anarcho-communism. In short, recognize the "unbridgeable chasm" (to borrow the words of your favorite "grumpy old man") for what it is, and develop forms of organization accordingly.

The main difference between the original platformist strategy and contemporary platformist-influenced anarchist federations (such as NEFAC) is that we do not want to waste our time trying to orient the entire anarchist "movement" to our program. Beyond this, for the more cynical anarchists in our ranks who have spent years organizing within the general anarchist-activist milieu (such as myself), the anarchist "movement," on the whole, is something of a lost cause and not worth the effort. I personally don't want to waste my time arguing theory with primitivists, individualists, or "post-leftists" in an effort to build some false sense of unity. I feel that I have as little politically in common with these anarchist tendencies as I do with any of the Marxist-Leninist tendencies (who I also don't waste my time arguing with!). In short, I personally consider infusing radical militancy and anarchist methods of organization within the everyday struggles of the working class as a far more worthy goal for anarchists who are serious about making revolution...the theoretical posturing should be left to the armchair academics!

"Those of us from NEFAC accept our differences with many anarchists (which is why we identify ourselves explicitly as "anarcho-communists" and not "anarchists" in a general sense), and never expected that we would exercise wide influence within the general anarchist "movement." Nor do we want to. We are not sectarian, just realistic. We would certainly work with individuals or groups from any anarchist tendency on projects, actions, or campaigns where common ground already exists (militant disruption of trade summits, fighting neo-nazis in the streets, walking a picket line, defending abortion access, etc.), however, that is entirely different from trying to develop an ongoing

close working relationship around a false sense of "anarchist unity."

Within our own organization we do indeed require a level of discipline, responsibility and seriousness, and we strive for both theoretical and tactical unity. We are committed revolutionaries, and this is how we have chosen to organize ourselves. If other anarchists have fundamental disagreements with our political orientation or methods of organization, they shouldn't join NEFAC. Simple enough, no?

There is nothing contradictory in platformist methods of organization in regards to anarchist theory and practice; we have simply chosen to freely associate with one another under a common program in an effort to work toward common goals.

With that said, we are very conscious about potential hierarchies, unequal gender dynamics, unnecessary bureaucracies or lack of democratic process developing in our federation, and have made painstaking efforts to confront these issues when they have come to light. Of course, unlike the amorphous, general anarchist milieu (which suffers from what some refer to as the "tyranny of structurelessness"), we have a collective framework where these issues can be dealt with in a directly democratic way, resolutions can be reached, and policies can be implemented (and challenged) within the federation structure (and, yes, all members would be expected to abide by these policies!). A recent example resulted from unequal gender dynamics at a NEFAC conference, where, in response, a women's caucus was formed to confront the issue head-on. These comrades drafted a statement to present to the next conference with specific recommendations on how women's voices will have a more equal footing within the federation as [*sic*—editor's note: I assume this is really meant to read "than" rather than "is" but I wasn't completely sure so I have not changed it here] men (such as gendered stacking process at conferences, more federation

discussion around patriarchy and sexism in the movement, a sexism clause to adopt in our constitution, etc.). These recommendations will be voted on by the conference body, and if they pass, will become federation policy, although many self-absorbed individualists may scoff at this sort of institutionalized process as a breach of their personal "autonomy" we see it as an important means toward collective progress and development.

In closing, I hope this clears up some of the misconceptions and prejudices you hold towards those of us anarchists who identify as "platformists." We don't expect you to agree with our ideas or practice, just that you respect our legitimate position within the anarchist tradition and contemporary "movement," and not present outright falsehoods as fact in an effort to smear tendencies you disagree with.

Solidarity,
MaRK

Sabate Anarchist Collective
NEFAC-Boston
POB 230685
Boston, MA 02123

Jason replies:

Platformist confusion

Not knowing you nor your ideas, I certainly didn't have you personally in mind when I wrote any part of the editorial for the last issue of *Anarchy* magazine on "Anarchist Diversity versus Monolithic Anarchism." And the particular, tiny part of the editorial that has bothered you seems entirely unoffending and completely true to me. It would appear that the problem here is that you may mean something very different than I do when you speak of being a "platformist." And I can't help it if the meaning you want to give to this term doesn't match its actual historical meaning.

When I speak of platformists, I speak of those who agree with and identify themselves with all of the major ideas of Makhno, Mett, Arshinov, Valevsky, and Linsky's proposed "Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists." However, it has become apparent that at least some people now call themselves platformists, even

though they have significant disagreements with several of the major platformist principles. Personally, I don't understand the urge to call oneself by a label with which one actually disagrees. Especially if this makes one hypersensitive to criticisms of ideas which one doesn't even hold, but which go under the unlikely label one has adopted.

Thus, I have to say that I looked in vain for the "unfounded accusations and sectarian fantasies" you supposedly found in the original *Anarchy* editorial. It is neither unfounded, nor sectarian to suggest that the monolithic anarchism proposed by the "Platform" "will most often fail simply because a majority of anarchists won't submit to the sacrifice of autonomy necessary for the organizational discipline demanded by such inorganic projects."

Nor is it unfounded or sectarian to observe that "This fact can leave the proponents of a monolithic movement steaming mad about an imputed lack of organization, self-discipline, responsibility, theoretical development and effective strategy and tactics in the anarchist milieu. But the reality is that anarchists, as anyone who has spent much time working with them will know, are often well-organized and fairly responsible.... And beyond this, anarchists are certainly as theoretically astute as any other radicals where it counts most—in the critique of capital and state, and the demand for self-organized, self-directed resistance to them. Where anarchists come up most severely short (in the analyses of the advocates of monolithic solutions) is precisely in their refusal to be ideologically or organizationally corralled into the strategic wet-dreams of people who would like to constitute themselves as the next generation of radical leadership!"

Since, in fact, you explicitly deny that you advocate the monolithic anarchism of the "Platform's" one big General Union of Anarchists, even you must realize that the editorial comments are not aimed at you, but at those who actually agree with the "Platform" that "Anarchism...must gather its forces in one organization."

On the other hand, your attempt to identify the synthesists as

"monolithic," when they actually advocated an anarchist organization that would include as large a range as possible of the diversity of anarchist positions, *really* "can only be obscurantist." The synthesists may have been naive (personally, I think so), but from everything I've read they had no desire to unify the movement in any way that could be accurately described as "monolithic," under any of the most common meanings of the term. Their goal was explicitly something more like the common contemporary eco-anarchist goal of "unity in diversity."

The "rupture" with the anarchist movement proposed by the original platformists was far from a "constructive rallying point." It explicitly involved the attempt to reorganize anarchists into an immense, leftist, party-style organization with a correct ideological line and many other accoutrements of a Leninist party, including a watered-down variant of democratic centralism (under the rubric of "collective responsibility" and "tactical unity"—no "diversity of tactics" is tolerated in the General Union Anarchists!), a "secretariat" in "every cell" of the organization, an executive committee of the Union, etc. In actual fact, most of the anarchist movement at the time was already committed to class-struggle, to anarchist communism and to creating and maintaining appropriate levels of anarchist organization to fight for an anarchist society. The single important platformist innovation was (and remains) the attempted importation of organizational ideas and practices common to the authoritarian left parties of the time into the anarchist milieu.

You are right that I was initially surprised (and quite happy) to learn that "contemporary platformist-influenced anarchist federations" are not really believers in platformism per se, but in a highly compromised variant. Perhaps you should call yourselves neo-platformists in order to distinguish yourselves from genuine platformists? Otherwise you would seem to be asking for misunderstandings by calling yourselves simply "platformists" without any modifiers or disclaimers.

To whatever extent that you and NEFAC *don't* really hold to the

original platformist ideas, you and NEFAC simply aren't platformists. And criticisms of the original platformist's ideas do not apply to you. However, to whatever extent that you and NEFAC *do* agree with the original platformists, you should prepare to find yourselves criticized by the majority of the contemporary anarchist milieu with arguments very similar to those employed by Malatesta and other well-known anarchist communists of the time against the original "Platform."

The "Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists" obviously contains the same flaws today as it did when it was written. The major difference is that those flaws are even more obvious now that the international political left has collapsed almost everywhere it hasn't already fatally compromised itself. So there is even less reason for anarchists to take the "Platform" seriously now than there was in 1926. I for one hope that you and NEFAC outgrow whatever infatuation you currently have for it.

No to anarchy

Editors,

I want to keep this brief.

Your sense that "anarchy" lends itself to cooperative behavior is very far off the mark. Anyone subscribing to notions that representation stands for a kind of hierarchical arrogance couldn't possibly band together for more than three days with a group of friends. With strangers, all sorts of etiquette and rules have to be in place or nothing gets done. There are always those with energy and brains and ambition who lead.

Granted, they may be ill-focused, they may not work "for the group as a whole," they certainly—on most levels—generate great amounts of conformity and mediocrity. But deliberate lack of leadership yields nothing but extreme, narrowly selfish acts.

I'm not speaking of "saints"; I'm speaking of the other billions.

Direct action is a name for that kind of selfish "change NOW" with no sense of the problems involved in convincing people. Direct action is a name

for a power GRAB by those too impatient or too imbued with low self-worth to think they can convince others. Direct action is a name for misapplication of adolescent energy.

Anarchy Mag is for sale in book stores. What protects

Sorry, guys. Browsing your pap made me bristle at how you may mislead (young) people into violence. And how you reek with hypocrisy.

Yours truly,
Mark Newman
mnwmn2001@yahoo.com

Instead, it becomes forced "cooperation," or compulsory compliance, or even slavery in the most extreme circumstances.

Secondly, individual and collective (cooperative) direct action freely taken is the goal of anyone who prefers social freedom to social repression. To be on the side of wage-slavery, and of economic, political and bureaucratic manipulation isn't really anything to be proud of!

It's wonderful that you're concerned about why more bookstores aren't "destroyed"! Sometimes I wonder, myself, about the last vestiges of free speech and the free press which allow so many bookstores in North America to sell *Anarchy* magazine (amidst mountains of pro-capitalist, pro-military, pro-religious and pro-slavery crap of all sorts, of course) when it would be relatively easy to suppress it and act like it wasn't there. But I don't actually wonder about why more bookstores aren't "destroyed," since the vast preponderance of books and magazines they sell propound the American way of death quite faithfully.

And I'm afraid it's nothing to us if Marxists don't like anarchy! That's been one of their biggest problems historically—leading to the degeneration of Marxism in most cases to a funeral cult for now largely outdated forms of statist-left capital accumulation.

Finally, your arrogantly hypocritical concern about young people being misled into violence by anarchists had me rolling on the floor! Would you prefer that young people celebrate the US government mass-murder of civilians in the Afghanistan bombings (and other disgusting US aerial massacres, like the bombings in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, etc.) rather than be influenced by all the persistent anarchist anti-war organizing efforts? Or maybe you'd rather they signed up with those exclusively non-violent outfits with all the high-tech peace machinery: the US Army, US Navy, US Air Force or US Marines?

To accuse anarchists of "misleading (young) people into violence" while ignoring the massive Hollywood/military/industrial culture of sadistic violence is ludicrous. If that's the level of your thinking, give us all a break and go support the mass torture,



Tuli Kupferberg

GETTING READY FOR CAMPAIGN 2004

them (magazines or stores) from being destroyed? Anarchist patrols? When money comes to the coffers of *Anarchy* Mag, not-for-profit or not, where does that money go? Who decides? Who made you editor aside from money or force of leadership? Ever leave the doors of your offices open? Your bank account signable by anyone who is an anarchist and wants to use the cash?

It's not just the "capitalists" who saw the thin childishness and gross impracticalities of anarchism as a "philosophy," but the Marxists.

Jason responds:

Cooperation is anarchy

It's probably not worth responding to your infantile little temper tantrum, since you appear to have no desire to understand what anarchy actually means. But I'll give you the benefit of the doubt and assume that you aren't completely incapable of understanding.

First, there is certainly no contradiction between anarchy and cooperation. In fact, in any genuine sense cooperation *is* anarchy, since if cooperation is in any way unfree or forced, it becomes harder and harder to consider it real.

maiming and murder of poor people the world over somewhere else! We spit on militarism and sadistic violence here.

Christian anarchist

Anarchy,

I come from a rare mode of Belief. I am a Christian. Yet I consider myself very progressive. This is because I firmly believe that Christianity is a very progressive concept. Not as much as many would like, but it is much more than the Christian or Religious Right could ever imagine for centuries. Religious charlatans have used Christianity to enslave, conquer, pillage, rape, colonize, exploit, racially suppress. And this pattern continues to exist today. This is why many of my constituents on the far left have developed such hatred for anything Christian. They fail to realize that these Religious charlatans on the Right are no more spokespersons for God than the man in the moon. They are the hypocrites Jesus spoke about. They hate the poor. They rob the poor. They are the biggest purveyors of human rights abuse. They are the biggest proponents of Racist Politics and Policies. I've experienced that first hand by so-called Christian "Brethren." I can recall one Pastor in North Carolina scoffing at the idea of Racial Reconciliation. I bring all this up because I notice you also share the idea that there is no room for paying homage to God. The Word of God says unless the Lord build a house we labor in vain. My friends, many of our views are very much parallel, but as a progressive Christian I chose to make Christ the center of my quest for social justice activism. Your aspirations are beautiful but don't beat up on God or those who follow. Many of us are your constituents.

Your friend,
Jeff Saunders
San Diego, CA

Prisoner struggles

Dear Jason - Greetings!

You know, it just dawned on me. You guys are based in Missouri and one of the most im-

portant prisoner struggles is happening in Missouri—MPLU—Missouri Prison Labor Union, which is spearheaded by Jerome White-Bey, who is a dedicated & beautiful anarchist.

He and Bruce (Yero) Cummings have been unmercifully oppressed by the authorities. Yero has been stabbed—twice—in the last few months by a scum prisoner in collusion w/guards. Jerome is eternally in the hole & has recently been bit by a very poisonous spider making his leg swell horribly, as they refused to properly treat him.

They nonetheless are trying to make this project nationwide with a women's group, no mean feat when the constitution says all prisoners are slaves without rights with the added fascist (patriot) laws that are being forced on any & all progressive & revolutionary projects.

Harold Thompson, a "pure" anarchist is going through some very important prison litigation pertaining to his 1st Amendment rights to receive anarchist literature & to correspond with his comrades such as myself.

Khalfani M. Kaldun (s/n Leonard McQuay) is going through similar difficulties having his New Afrikan publications denied him (as S.T.G.—Security Threat Group stuff) in the Klan state of Indiana.

These types of cases of courageous, conscious prisoners who are battling the state, while already in chains, need to be broadcast & vigorously supported by serious anarchists, in my prison abolitionist opinion. For, it is ground zero of the domestic war. The world gets bombs and we get bars. All three are also insightful writers, whose writings I carry, among many other talented, important prisoners.

These are the kinds of cases, the new Chicago ABC will spread awareness of. Along with exposing the super predators who run this hideous, massive punishment industry, we'll analyze this sick society as the slavocracy it is, to the best of our humble, straightforward abilities.

Coercion drives this system for those who "get out of line"

are now superfluous to the present-day system of extreme capitalism or who for whatever unfortunate happenstance, find themselves in the clutches of the police—prison is often their sad fate. It's a lucrative industry whose product is human misery. It's the linchpin of the state & also the cauldron of revolt!

This is where people are thirsting for anarchy and where the authorities are on the offensive to suppress these "thought crimes." It's also where the most talented artists, writers & teachers are. These men and women need & deserve our total support.

We don't really have a handle on how we can help the people being bombed, starved and terrorized by the US government and their murderous underlings, but we can make connections to those suffering at the hands of the state—right here in the U.S. in hundreds of gulags full of cages all around us.

We need to make these connections now more than ever as the Ashcroftites push for total lockdown (Jeninzation).

Anthony Rayson
Monee, IL

An open letter to the CrimethInc ex-worker

My dear anonymous friend,

Thank you for your lengthy response to my review of *Days of War, Nights of Love (DoWNoL)*. You clarified your methodology, some of the ideas behind it and, thus, some of the differences in our perspectives. Since I do not accept the idea that one can determine the limits of how one's book will be perceived and used once it has left one's hands or consider the aims that you express in your letter to be worthwhile from an anarchist perspective, I won't give a lot of space to dealing with your explanations of who you intended to address with *DoWNoL*, nor to the question of its success in accomplishing your intended aim, but I will make a couple of brief comments on this before going on to the heart of our differences.

By publishing an explicitly anarchist text—regardless of

your intended audience—you have entered into the discussion of anarchist ideas, of anarchist theory. By giving the potential effects of your words priority over the authentic expression of your ideas, you accomplish a few things you may not have intended: the ideas you express come to lack coherence; readers are unable to decipher what you actually think, desire and dream, thus precluding the possibility of developing relationships of affinity; your communication with the intended audience becomes unilateral (your words are the cause to the effects produced in the reader) and thus inherently hierarchical. When such communications enter into anarchist discussion, it should be hoped that they would provoke a critical response.

There is nothing particularly anarchist in aiming for a generic effectiveness, in seeking to "make things happen" when those things are nebulously defined or in using words in an attempt to manipulate people's behavior. These are the aims you say you have and they parallel the aims of any good politician or advertising executive. Thus, I would argue that these actions you compose with your words are the reproduction of the social relationships of publicity—the manipulative use of words and images to produce an effect. You not only fail to challenge this relationship, but, in fact, embrace it as a practice.

Though you state that "actions speak louder than words," your faith in words is evident since you believe that the fact that you tell people to avoid subcultural identities and to refrain from using *DoWNoL* as a guidebook is sufficient, even though *DoWNoL* is written in the form of a primer and encourages a practice that tends to create or function best in a subcultural context. I think the problem lies in the fact that you don't seem to realize that creating texts to simply "challenge the assumptions" of those who still accept capitalist/hierarchical values without also authentically expressing your ideas and desires produces a social relationship that is inherently hierarchi-

cal, using the methodology of a political party that has "the answer" and is thus justified in using every means to get people to act as the propagandists see fit.

So the question is not one of "objective truth" (which I never mention in my review), but of using words as a specific type of action with a specific aim—the creation of an authentic existence. When I speak of an authentic existence, I mean one in which an individual consciously creates her ideas, desires, passions dreams, projects, in short, his life as her own and seeks peers with whom to share and live this creative process.

Every institution, system and ideology, all the social relationships of domination and exploitation including those we reproduce in our practice, stand in the way of this aim. Thus, one of the central objectives of an anarchist practice, as I see it, is the subversion of social relationships. By this, I mean the destruction of current social relationships, which are based on domination, exploitation and hierarchy through active attack against the institutions, structures, systems and practices that embody these relationships and the attempt to carry out one's own projects and develop one's own relationships and struggle to reappropriate one's life in a consciously different manner.

When I communicate, I am thus not simply trying to "make things happen," but trying to make very specific types of things happen. I am, in fact, trying to discover and develop relationships of affinity that can provide a basis for an autonomous and informal self-organization of revolt against the ruling order. One of the most basic anarchist principles of struggle has been that the end must already exist in the means or the struggle is lost from the start—and this principle is maintained because the history of revolutionary struggle upholds it. In relation to how I interact with those whom I consider actual or potential comrades, this means communicating with openness, transparency and clarity. If this "triggers automatic responses" in certain

people, that is not my problem. Clearly such people are not, at the moment, individuals with whom the potential for affinity exists. Since it would not presently be possible for me to develop a free and egalitarian

ods with which I communicate my struggle that carries the life and the world I desire within it.

In order to understand what I mean by the demystification of history, it is also necessary to understand the various concep-

something beyond us that we cannot change. In this view, the past defines and controls the present precisely as a dead hand. Such a view serves conservative ends far better than it does those of revolt to which you attempt to turn it.

Rather than replacing this view with that of some Marxists and Hegelians, in which a determined and inevitable future is the hand of history defining and controlling the present, the demystification of history recognizes it as nothing more nor less than the activity of human being attempting to create their lives and their world. The fact that this activity is largely unconscious is what permits a ruling class to control it in their own interests and what allows history to be mystified and transferred into myths supporting one or another oppressive system of social relationships. Revolts and insurrections are times when the apparatus of deception breaks down and people began to see themselves as protagonists of their own existence. But such times are reflective of an ongoing struggle—the struggle as old as civilization between those who rule and those they exploit. And, thus, the past in this view is not something that is completed, a museum piece to be viewed. From a revolutionary perspective, it is an unfinished task, an ongoing project, aspirations and desires which have yet to be fulfilled. This project which has not yet been fulfilled is the reappropriation and self-determination of life in all its aspects, and thus the destruction of everything that stands in the way of this goal—all domination, all exploitation, all hierarchy and delegation. Knowledge of the past, in this view, is thus a tool—or rather a weapon—for carrying out one's struggle in the present. Like any weapon, this one serves best when it is well honed. And its sharpness depends on having as accurate a conception as possible of the struggles of the past so that we can examine them critically and appropriate what is useful to us both in the negative and in the positive and struggle to complete the project here and now.



"Sexy-Subliminal" collage by F.W. Flores.

relationship with these people—a relationship that truly challenges domination and hierarchy—their response to my communications would not interest me. It is those—whether they call themselves anarchists or not—with whom I can openly come to an understanding of similarities and differences and discover the possibility of affinities that interest me. As should be clear, this has nothing to do with a moral adherence to either "objective truth" or to honesty, since it clearly leaves the useful option of lying to our enemies quite open. Instead it is an attempt to create a different way of relating in the meth-

tions of history as reflections of social relationships. The conception of history expressed in "The Dead Hand of the Past" and illustrated (however much in jest) by the historical vignettes throughout the book, in fact, uses history very much like the majority of mainstream historians—as a string of completed events that are like so many exhibits in a museum. They can be manipulated to one's ends in a mythological way, as a source of inspiration or provocation or a method of inducing awe, loyalty to a cause, mourning at a supposed loss or simply boredom, apathy and a sense of futility, that is, as

From this it should be clear that the demystification of history is not the replacement of one revealed "truth" with another, nor the playful mockery of the dominant revealed "truth" using its own methods, but rather the reappropriation of the past as a tool for creating our present lives in revolt against the social order.

Ultimately, your response leaves me with the feeling that for you revolt, anarchy and desire are still causes outside of yourself for which you seek adherents, so that your communications are carried out for the effects they have on others, not in terms of what you desire to gain for yourself from them. This is what makes it more important that your words create a certain reaction than that they express your ideas, aspirations and desires as authentically as possible. As yet, you are not nearly selfish enough.

Wolfi Landstreicher
acraticus@yahoo.com
Los Angeles, CA

Anarchy is too expensive

Hello distro!

Firstly I would like to thank ya'll for the great work inside and out of the magazine. Diverse and informative stuff. And with the added aesthetic pleasure. That said the real issue I have is ironically the same issue I recently conveyed to Mike Albert of *Z*. His response was expected, an academic demeanor and false information. I was wondering what your take was on the situation. Your magazine is what, \$4.95? Or somewhere around that area. I would confer with my copy of the latest issue but I gave it to someone on the bus. The thing is while the magazine is very nicely put together with all the neat pictures and professional layout, I had to stand in front of the magazine for too many minutes debating if it was worth the \$5 to read it at my leisure or to save that money for food. I'm assuming the high cost is due to distribution and production realities. Which of course makes sense considering our current economic system. But what strikes me odd is that

it is an anarchist magazine. Sitting next to *Z* and the *Nation* or whatever it seems to blend right in in format and more surprisingly in price. Most anarchists I know are not wealthy although they do enjoy to read.

though hindered by the fact that not all the articles are on-line and it isn't frequently updated). Or we could just not read it? The thing is without the \$5 to spare your magazine becomes increasingly difficult to enjoy

ested in Albert's response I can forward it to you. hope to hear from you soon.

love and liberation,
asaya
asaya59@hotmail.com

Jason responds:

Open to suggestions

There are many anarchist periodical projects and many, many ways for anarchists to tackle the task of getting information into the hands of as many people as possible.

Personally, I would agree that the best thing to do on the distribution end is always to give magazines out for free—and *Anarchy* started out its life as a free news sheet for the first 10 or 15 issues at least. I even took a few years off from *Anarchy* and went to college in order to be able to get a better paying wage-slave job so that I could afford to print it up and send it out for free with more pages printed with better quality and in larger quantities. However, as the project evolved from a collectively produced news sheet—given away freely—towards an internationally-distributed magazine (due primarily to the fact that most of the people who ended up wanting to read the thing didn't live locally and wanted to subscribe or buy it in other places) it took on its current format.

I am the one who has set the price, which enables me to get every issue distributed to thousands of people around the world on a somewhat regular and continuing basis. There is, of course, no reason why many copies couldn't also be distributed for free around the world as well by interested comrades. All it takes is for them to do a little fund-raising themselves in order to get bulk quantities of the magazine to distribute however they wish. For example, \$100 per issue could get you 40 copies postpaid (as long as there are no returns) sent each time for you to distribute however you wanted. \$500 could get 250 copies postpaid to send out or give away freely. I'd love to have a few hundred people taking the initiative to do some fund-raising in order to distribute 10,000 or 15,000 more copies to people who might read *Anarchy* if they actually had one handed to them for free by a

James trying to
imagine another tact
for getting his feminine
side to cook for him.



Would it be wise or at least more anarchist to make the magazine more affordable, in order to reach an audience outside of middle-aged stable job holding pseudo-anarchists? A bit rash yes, but I miss the logic of high priced magazines directed at anarchists and concerned with social change. Perhaps what I'm looking for is a little action from all the theory. Of course there lie other options to buying the magazine. We could just read it all in the bookstore (if you're up to the task). Or steal it from the local anarchist or progressive newsstand (which seems like more harm than good). You could read the on-line version (al-

and explore. Suggestions could be entertained such as putting all the articles on-line. Which still results in problems due to lack of internet access by many people who don't have computers with access at home. Or easy access to campuses, libraries, infoshops. And if this was not the case we should be trying to make it as easy as possible to make anarchist opinion/information etc. as available as possible. Other options may be cutting back the flashy layout or fundraising to provide free subscriptions. Sounds like more work. And I know you are all very busy. I just thought it might be something to think about, eh. And if you are inter-

friend. There's really nothing stopping people from doing this if they wanted to. However, apparently very, very few anarchists are interested in this kind of fund-raising or doing this kind of magazine distribution, so I have to live with the alternative, which is to charge enough for selling copies of the magazine so that I can afford to continue printing and shipping it around the world.

In order to charge for the magazine and get it to the most people, it has proven important to print the magazine with a colorful cover so that people actually look at it when they see it on newsstands or book shops. I could get rid of the color cover and print the magazine on newsprint, but then I couldn't get bookstores and newsstands (at least not very many of them) to carry *Anarchy* at all. I'd be shooting myself in the foot—making the magazine cheaper at the cost of losing virtually all possibility of getting it out to many potential readers who now are able to get it.

I'm always open to suggestions if you can come up with some realistic way to get the magazine printed and distributed to people. But I haven't come up with anything better than the way I'm doing it right now. And as far as I can see neither has anyone else.

In defense of the platform

Letter to the editor

In your editorial "Openers" you critique those anarchists, who I am one of them, that seek to create a unified anarchist movement as being monolithic and doomed to failure. Though the idealism of a great diversity of ideas of anarchism is nice, but it does not answer the question of, how do we create an anarchist society?

We face very powerful forces, the state and the capitalist ruling class. How can we ever create the revolutionary force that it will take in order to defeat that powerful force if we are going in so many directions at the same time? I believe that the revolutionary force needed to defeat the powerful force we are up against will not be a manifestation of all of our idealism. But it should include basic anarchist principles and include a realistic unity of orga-

nizational ideas and action.

The question I believe facing anarchism is: do we wish to be only an expression of countless idealistic ideas that will never materialize and simple social protest or do we unite behind the necessary realistic forms of organization and action that it will take to bring about an anarchist society?

Just because an anarchist movement unites behind a common purpose of do that which it will take to create an anarchist society does not mean that it must get bogged down in strict dogma, organizational forms and tactics. For that would limit its ability to face different situations. In other words it must be flexible in order to succeed. Nor should the anarchist movement be but one monolithic organization, but rather it should be many organizations working in cooperation with each other.

It is interesting that you point out the "Anarchist Platform," considering that Makhno and Arshinov were among those that issued it. And then one should look to page 31, your C.A.L. Press Books and there is Arshinov's *History of the Makhnovist Movement*, which you praise. It should be understood that the "Anarchist Platform" was written for the purpose of trying to overcome those things that lead to the defeat of anarchism in Russia. Though the platform should not be taken as an anarchist bible and it should be understood that anarchism has progress in many ways since it was written, still there is much that can be learned from the platform.

In The Spirit Of Total Resistance,

Arthur J. Miller
bayou@blarg.net

P.S. Since, as you stated, there is much misunderstanding of ideas and so that you may know how much you may disagree with my ideas, I'll e-mail you two pieces I wrote that express what I believe in.

Jason responds: More confusions about the "Platform"

It's very interesting how the people who (for whatever reasons)

want to defend Makhno, Mett, Arshinov, Valevsky, and Linsky's proposed "Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists" seem very ambivalent about it themselves, to the point of contradicting themselves.

As you, yourself, say positively in one of the two pieces you have sent accompanying your letter, "The Battle of Seattle was not the work of any single organization or coalition of organizations; rather it was a coming together of many organizations and groups with a common target...." And further, "Anarchism is not a single organization or organizational concept. Anarchism is a great diversity of ideas and organizations. This is not a weakness but rather it is our strength because it reflects the ideas of a greater number of people and there is not any single controlling organization or leadership...."

Compare this with what I actually said in the editorial to which you object: "One of the most appealing aspects of the anarchist milieu is not just the lack of any sort of monolithic party line to which individual anarchists must adhere, but the positive disdain of—and resistance by—the vast majority of anarchists towards the recurring efforts to impose anything resembling a rigid line upon our theory and practice. I daresay that at any given time most anarchists understand well that our diversity is one of our greatest strengths. And that attempts to create any sort of monolithic anarchist movement...will most often fail simply because a majority of anarchists won't submit to the sacrifice of autonomy necessary for the organizational discipline demanded by such inorganic projects."

Then compare both your and my words (remarkable for their similarities in my opinion) with the inescapably contrary words of the "Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists": "Taken as a whole, [the] state of revolutionary anarchism can only be described as 'chronic general disorganization.'"

"Like yellow fever, this disease of disorganization introduced itself into the organism of the anarchist movement and has shaken it for dozens of years."

Following which, the "Platform"

illogically concludes that anarchism "must gather its forces in one organization...." And this *one* monolithic organization will be "The executive organ of the general anarchist movement, the Anarchist Union." Which in turn will have an "executive committee [which] will be in charge of the following functions: the execution of decisions taken by the Union with which it is entrusted; the theoretical and organizational orientation of the activity of isolated organizations consistent with the theoretical positions and the general tactical line of the Union; the monitoring of the general state of the movement; the maintenance of working and organizational links between all the organizations in the Union; and with other organizations."

I don't see how the difference between our mutual position concerning the positive values of autonomy and diversity of organizing and ideas versus the platformist position that autonomy and diversity of organizing is a "disease of disorganization" (which must be eradicated in order to build a single, monolithic organization, complete with an executive committee charged with "reorienting" wayward anarchists) could be any more glaring and obvious.

You state that "there is much to learn from the 'Platform.'" But what are we supposed to learn from a quasi-anarchist document written by demoralized anarchists who were willing to throw out fundamental anarchist theoretical and organizational principles in an attempt to create a leftist party-style organization meant to rival the Bolsheviks and contend with them for power. You can't have it both ways. You can either identify with the platformist idea that the diversity of the anarchist movement should be suppressed and molded to fit into a single, "unified" anarchist organization with a single, "unified" ideology, or you can join the vast majority of anarchists in celebrating anarchist autonomy and diversity in theory and practice.

You say you "believe that the revolutionary force needed to defeat the powerful force we are up against will not be a manifestation of all of our idealism. But it should include basic anarchist principles

and include a realistic unity of organizational ideas and action."

I don't know anyone who would oppose "a realistic unity of organizational ideas and action." The actual question you're faced with, however, is whether or not you think that individual anarchists and anarchist groups should all be joined together somehow into one superorganization with a single ideology every member must be disciplined to follow as the "Platform" explicitly proposes? Or should anarchists remain free to organize in a plurality of modes and forms, while developing their ideas freely and autonomously in order to best resist and fight capital and the state as they each see fit?

The beauty of the anarchist milieu, as I said in my editorial is the inherent "disdain of—and resistance by—the vast majority of anarchists towards the recurring efforts to impose anything resembling a rigid line upon our theory and practice." I urge you to uncompromisingly celebrate this beauty with all the many other anarchists who consider our personal and group autonomy and diversity to be positively inviolable principles for a healthy movement.

Monolithic organization, "collective discipline" and dogmatic ideological unity be damned!

Empire for the Multitude

The day that I finished *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri was also the day that I read Rob los Ricos' review, "Empire for Beginners" (*Anarchy* #53). Ricos' overall criticism of globalization is very relevant, but he does not see that he and the authors of *Empire* are often in agreement. He recounts the history contained in the book without working with the concepts, which are a very important part. Ricos claims to point out the precepts of Hardt and Negri: progressivism, Marxism, Euro-centrism, and an "enthusiasm for the arrival of this horribly dehumanizing Empire under which we live." However, none of these precepts are Hardt or Negri's.

First, Hardt and Negri do not valorize Empire. Theoretical acknowledgement of a situation is not the same as singing its

praise. Empire is here whether we like it or not. Instead, Hardt and Negri propose a history of the construction of Empire, from the crises of modernity and the state. The modern state arose as a monarchy, but through struggles and crises, the state came to be defined by nationalism, and then as a People, a homogeneous group that can be politically represented by the state. This is a crucial point for Hardt and Negri, for in opposition to a People they place the multitude, a creative, desiring community of individuals that is not exclusive, but a multiplicity and an open possibility of relations. Ricos equates a people with the multitude, stating that the multitude has replaced "the proletarian masses, who still retained some distinguishing characteristics as people." However, the proletariat is much closer to the multitude than a People. This difference is extremely important.

Ricos talks about an alliance of state and capitalism, saying the state creates crises in order for capitalism to move forward, but Hardt and Negri underline the fact that both the state and capitalism are only reactive. In fact, in the transition to Empire, capitalism had to deterritorialize all the boundaries of the nation-state. Ricos claims that nation-states "will always exist" in empire, but as Hardt and Negri show, they are constantly traversed, and decline in importance in the imperial pyramid. Later, Ricos changes his story stating, "States are becoming increasingly unnecessary to Empire." Either way, capital was not the productive factor of the transition to Empire; the productive forces are the struggles against capital.

In fact, it is crucial to read *Empire* from the perspective of production, or it might seem that the state, or the nation, or later Empire is the motor of change. Ricos reads production as assimilation. It is not, for several reasons. First, Empire renders the difference between inside and outside as pivotal points for struggle irrelevant: all struggles take place on the global grounds of Empire, in-

volving direct confrontation between the multitude and Empire. This is not assimilation; it is oppressive action responding to the resistance of the multitude.

Second, production in Empire has brought together the political, the social and the economic. This production includes an important communicative aspect, called immaterial production. This does not mean that Hardt and Negri overlook industrial production, but they point out that it is transformed by the new production of information and communication just as the industrial revolution transformed agriculture. This new mode of production has created a decentralized and mobile productive order depending on the multitude for constant innovation and reproduction; enabling both the production of new subjectivities and new possible forms of resistance. This is the imperial paradox: while Empire relies on this creative production, it must ensure that this production does not exceed imperial command.

Along with production, the concept of the multitude reveals Hardt and Negri's ultimate aim. Ricos makes several incorrect claims about the multitude: it is "a disgusting attempt to create a sort of multicultural racism;" synonymous with consumers, as "all cultural and social differences are now irrelevant, since Empire has reduced all possible identities to one—that of the consumer;" and the "fact that some people are successfully waging war against Empire is inconceivable to Hardt and Negri."

The first two accusations come from reading the multitude as a People. A People is inseparable from the nation-state, a representative group "having one will, and to whom one action may be attributed," (*Empire*, 103) with an identity based on exclusion. In contrast, the multitude is manifest in a multiplicity of subjectivities that are not defined by exclusion, but include differences, and allow for mobility and communication. The multitude is not some helpless consumer, but the producer. The multitude is the

productive factor, to which Empire can only maintain command. The multitude does not only produce economic goods, but also produce the capacity for life and value. Meaning and value have not abandoned humanity, as there are now new possibilities:

Production fills the surfaces of Empire; it is a machine that is full of life, and intelligent life that by expressing itself in production and reproduction as well as in circulation (of labor, affects, and languages) stamps society with a new collective meaning and recognizes virtue and civilization in cooperation (Empire, 365).

In contrast, "imperial government appears as an empty shell or a parasite." (*Empire*, 359) The multitude is difference, mobility, and cooperation, not racist homogenization or assimilation; it is productive power, the very production of life, to which empire can only coerce at its own peril; and it is a new possibility for creation and resistance, not passive consumerism.

Ricos' accusations of Euro-centrism and progressivism don't stand up. Hardt and Negri are not progressives: they do not ignore the bloodshed and suffering of modernity, nor to they valorize Empire. It is no surprise to Hardt and Negri that resistances to Empire emerge everywhere, against its imperial global order. These resistances are inside and immanent to imperial power, disturbing the very function of imperial global order, whether it's Chiapas, Seattle or Genoa.

There is one more point to address: the label of Marxism. If the authors utilize Marxism, it has often been transformed. Ricos accuses them of a "progressivist love of the state." Compare this to Hardt and Negri:

Some might object that the productive biopolitical universe still requires some form of command over it, and that realistically we should aim not at destroying big government but at putting our hands on its controls. We have to put an end to such illusions that have plagued the socialist and communist traditions for so long! (Empire, 349)

The authors' Marxist investments are also transformed by the work of the post-structuralists, such as Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari. Their influence shows when Hardt and Negri emphasize the role of creative production. However, H&N do not propose a program, as only the experimentation and self-organization of the multitude can create resistances. In other words, they trade the vanguard party for cooperation.

The real issue with Hardt and Negri for anarchists should be their insistence on waving the flag of communism. The fact that there is no state-form in the organization of the multitude shows some alliance with anarchism. If communication and production is as important as they claim, and I think it is, the difference between communism and anarchism is more than convenient literary usage, but the production of possibilities of resistance. In my opinion, the close proximity of this communism and anarchism indicates that anarchism is also a viable form of resistance.

This book is far more innovative than Ricos indicates, merging postmodern philosophy, Marxism, politics and anti-globalization into a work that, despite the fact that it may not be 'for beginners,' poses many challenges to the global order of things. This book is not an *end* of the resistance to empire, but the *beginning* of the challenge.

Devin Zayne Shaw
Toledo, OH
devinflux@yahoo.com

City Failure

The sun appears
over the tombs of Manhattan
streaming shafts of light
between
skeletons of steel and glass

Between the rising concrete
grave-stones
terrorized beings run to & fro
down asphalt-covered streets,
up brick-paved avenues
into mausoleums of finance,
out from shrines
of the living dead —
serving the "American Dream."

—Malachi Truman Harris

Inside Empire

One of the most important aspects of *Empire* is that it accepts Deleuze and Guattari's premise that capitalism heralds positive as well as negative

twofold: 1. at the level of the local, resistance must be made to capital at every turn; 2. at a general level, the connections of Empire—such as the internet—must be used "through" Empire "against" Empire. To outright



Kansas anarchists: Great Plains Anarchist Network. Photo by Blaize
<http://www.kansasanarchist.net/GPAN/gpan.htm>

change. In D+G's *Anti-Oedipus*, they call this positive (although dangerous) element "axiomatization," the ceaseless, never-ending process of decoding. Empire further enhances this decoding, aka deterritorialisation.

To oppose Empire completely is to misunderstand the positive aspects of Empire as well as to believe that the opposition can exist and take place as an outside and an inside. The positive aspects of deterritorialisation found in Empire on a practical level include the globalisation of resistance, the internetworked contact of the revolutionary and the multitude, and the creation of new planes of resistance—information networks. This is why the name "anti-globalisation movement" is such a misnomer, for the point is not (if one holds to the above) to oppose "globalisation" but to oppose the corporatisation of the globe. As far as I understand Negri and Hardt, "because there is no outside to Empire" (as Rob Los Ricos seems, at points, to understand), resistance must be paradoxical and

oppose such technological developments would be to oppose and nullify new topographies of resistance. Indeed, there is a sense, to me, that "furthering" Empire, *i.e.* pushing it to its breaking point, is a tactic worthy of consideration.

Therefore, when I hear Los Ricos say that "Resistance must come from without," I find Ricos sadly missing the point of Negri and Hardt's thesis. Arguments over the language employed aside (in fact I believe *Empire*—the book—to be quite readable, a very clear and pragmatic assertion of the writing of Deleuze and Guattari and Debord, among others), Ricos, despite his attempts to understand this vast paradigm shift that Negri and Hardt attribute to the new Empire, still employs 18th/19th century paradigms of resistance—*i.e.*, that resistance must come from "outside." The end of Ricos' review falls completely apart, with one paragraph stating that "Anything which takes place within Empire can be recuperated for Empire's own needs. Anything. Every-

thing. That's its nature." While the beginning sentence asserts that "But resistance to imperial power won't come from within," and the last paragraph stating that:

"Resistance must come from without, which means, primarily, creating human identities that emphasize our relationships with the biosystems we inhabit rather than with commodities, economics, the state or nationalities."

What Hardt and Negri assert is that "there is no outside to Empire," which pragmatically recognises Deleuze's assertion of difference over identity (I believe this can also be seen as a politics of a deconstruction put into praxis). Ricos seems rather confused as to Negri and Hardt's argument at this point, as he attempts to reassert "naturalistic" connections to biosystems and the formation of "identities." According to Deleuze in "Repetition and Difference," it is the problematic category of identity that leads to the quantitative exchange-value of capitalism; *i.e.* identity asserts exactly what Ricos wishes to avoid: nationalities and states and other hierarchical structurations. Exchange-value as axiomatization can be turned to positive affect as decoding, deterritorialisation; however, as that which forms identities, it leads to the master/slave, heteronormative and patriarchal relationships of capital: daddy-capital, mommy earth, child-consumer in the Oedipal family. Rico's plan to create identities that emphasize relationships with biosystems, if thought not in terms of identity but in terms of becoming and difference, is closer to the ethology that Deleuze employs: becoming-animal, becoming-orchid. However, it would seem that this distinction between identity and difference is lost on Ricos, leaving Ricos to assert a last-century stance of "outside" Empire, looking for that elusive ground to stand on, forcing the resistance to act as coloniser and Eurocentric explorer to find that new territory to inhabit beyond Empire so as to fight its borders in skirmishes, rather than resisting from the always

already within and pushing its boundaries to the breaking point, stretching its membrane so thin across various systems that it cannot control, it loses all control of its control—indeed, such are the basic premises found in much of Hakim Bey's work from the mid-80s, an anarchist with a subtle understanding of the positionings of resistance.

Unlike Ricos, I do not believe Negri and Hardt profoundly misplace the struggles of indigenous peoples worldwide. What they see, however, is that indigenous systems are not "outside" Empire. What is ironic is that the model Ricos proposes—fighting from outside—is the territorial and colonial model that propels imperialism; he then attributes this to possibly non-territorial models of indigenous relationships to land as a strategy of resistance. We must ask: is not Ricos from the outside to these indigenous peoples? Is territory recoding indigenous peoples into Eurocentric models of being (the castle)? The questions revolve around appropriation and authenticity, and return us back to identity and the question of speaking-for-the-other. Indeed, it is the model of Negri and Hardt that more closely resembles indigenous conceptions of land as becoming-space rather than territory, such as the songlines of Australian aborigines. And it is necessary to realise that indigenous organisation does not a priori constitute a non-patriarchal, non-hierarchical modality of being; the indigenous form of life is not Good by virtue of its existence, and it too must be subject to a careful critique of profound respect. It must be noted that many indigenous organisations strive for self-sufficiency in capital and corporation. However, I cannot claim to speak on behalf of, nor to understand, indigenous arguments and beliefs. What I can say is that Hardt and Negri's view of history is propelled by the energy of protest and resistance. It is capital which changes only because of resistance, and not vice-versa. Therefore, Empire is a product of resistance: it is

ours, and this is why there is no outside.

I can sympathise with Rob Los Ricos. Like Negri, he is a political prisoner. Incarcerated and held by the State, to see the positive affect of Empire alongside the negative and the possibility of always already fighting from "within" must be incredibly, if not impossibly difficult. To say that there is no outside is not to succumb to frustration and defeat and selling-out; it is to shoulder responsibility for action and to realise one's always-already implication in Empire. One cannot escape one's function in the machine, even as that which creates a blockage. To say that there is no outside is to shout a positive affirmation of existence and agency: Yes! Yes!

tobias c. van Veen
tobias@techno.ca

Half-wit class warrior

I'm wondering if you realize the degree of class-consciousness contained in Kevin Keating's "The Mission Yuppie Eradication Project"? Left unchecked, these ideas could detract from your larger message of "the joys of knuckle-dragging." I'll keep this brief as I have to go pick up my loincloth at the dry-cleaners. At least now I know who it is giving anarchism a bad name.

For a self-managed society,
Don Jennings
Lafayette, GA
donjennings@alltel.net

See Sharp Press troubles

See Sharp Press, the US-based anarchist publisher that has printed *African Anarchism*, *Cuban Anarchism*, and various anarchist pamphlets over the years (in addition to books on a variety of other subversive topics viz. *The Heretic's Handbook* and *Devil's Dictionary*), is under attack by Bank One. Bank One foreclosed (in effect) on See Sharp Press's distributor and has claimed that books LPC was distributing, including most of See Sharp's inventory, are LPC's property and therefore owed to them!! LPC sells on consignment—they do not own See

Sharp's books. This action threatens to bankrupt one of the most important anarchist/alternative media outfits in the US! We must take a stand!

SEE SHARP PRESS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT! Visit www.seesharppress.com

Please link to See Sharp on your site and inform others about this! Big business must not be allowed to win on our own turf! This one is crucial, folks!

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

1) Any and all mail orders, online orders, and donations will be greatly appreciated.
2) If you'd like to send postcards of the cartoon featured on our home page, addressed to the CEO of Bank One, to tell him your view of this situation, please send us a self-addressed stamped envelope (#10 size 4-1/8" x 9-1/2"), and we'll send you one (or more—just tell us how many).

3) Write a letter to the Comptroller of the Currency, John Hawke, asking him to investigate this case and expressing your thoughts about this situation. His address is John Hawke, Comptroller of the Currency, 250 "E" Street SW, Washington, DC 20219. See Ralph Nader's letter for a good model.

4) You can send a copy of any letter you write to Comptroller Hawke to Jamie Dimon, CEO of Bank One, 1 Bank Plaza, Chicago, IL 60670. This will let the bank know that you favor a federal investigation of its activities.

5) Please let as many other people as possible know about this assault on small publishers. One way to do that, if you have a web site, would be to put up a link to this page. Thank you!

<http://www.seesharppress.com>

A call for left/right Anarchist Unity

I believe that "left anarchists" (anarcho-communists, anarcho-syndicalists, green anarchists, etc.) and "right anarchists" (anarcho-capitalists, market anarchists, libertarian anarchists, etc.) have more than enough common ground for a

real basis of unity that can be used not only for theoretical development and the growth of knowledge, but also for common strategies and projects against The System.

What is the common ground between the camps? Well, the most obvious example is—we're all against the State, against ALL States.

Other things that both sides generally are against—war, police, intellectual property, theft, extortion, the mafia, religion, racism, sexism, homophobia, conformity, mainstream society, militarism, obedience, coercive psychiatry, the institution of marriage, taxation, statist, rulers, would-be rulers, politicians, political parties, the electoral system, aristocracy, theocracy, determinism, blind faith, imperialism, mercantilism, Marxism, Fascism, political economy, world government, the military-industrial complex, the police state, prisons, and the Corporate State.

We also share common values—free association, non-aggression, individual liberty, secessionism, free speech, the right to bear arms, women's right to abortion, decentralization, individual initiative, self-governance, autonomy, self-sovereignty, voluntary cooperation, voluntary association, rational thought, independent thought, and diversity.

This is a lot of common ground! So much so, that I think that one would be hard-pressed to find another group that "regular anarchists" have so much in common with!

With this being the case, why not unify? Why not work together against our common enemies? The obstacles that we need to overcome are enormous, and we need all the help we can get. And right anarchists make a good ally in this struggle, because unlike the various kinds of Marxists and statist leftists, we all know that they are not after State power for themselves, but instead seek the complete abolition of it. There is no other group of people out there that you can trust in this respect. Need I remind you of past revolutions where anarchists worked together with the

statist left?

Each group holds negative prejudices, stereotypes, and gross misunderstandings about the other. Left anarchists tend to mistakenly believe that right anarchists want more of what we have now—imperialism, mercantilism and a Corporate State, instead of wanting no government whatsoever. The right anarchists tend to mistakenly see the left anarchists as being a new form of Leninist or as wanting a conformist tyranny-of-the-majority Borg. All this misinformation needs to be cleared up and overcome in order for any REAL mutual understanding to come about.

Another obstacle in the way of left/right anarchist unity is the tendency for knee-jerk reactions, stubbornness and uncritical hostility towards the other camp and to anyone who proposes unity with them. A calm, thoughtful, and open-minded approach to this is needed in both camps. If we enter this thinking that the other group is scum, will always be scum, and is just out there to screw us over, then chances are that we will be provoking the other group to such defensiveness that they will appear to us to be living up to our expectations.

I'm not saying there aren't substantial differences between the two groups—there certainly are. Every anarchist faction has its own different and unique characteristics—that's what makes it its own faction. I don't see how these differences are irreconcilable or insurmountable—worse comes to worse, in an anarchist society the right anarchists will have their little territories where they live and do their thing, and the left anarchists will have their little territories where they live and do their thing. As long as each side leaves the other alone and promises not to go invade the other side, things will be cool.

Let's start learning from each other, gaining positive things from the other camp's worldview and analysis. Let's come up with common strategies that will present a real threat to The System. And most importantly, let's follow through with this strategy and work together to

bring this vile system down to its knees.

(I)An-ok Ta Chai
yan_ock@lycos.com

Parecon critique strained

Dear *Anarchy* magazine,

As an anarchist and long time supporter of the parecon model I found Lawrence Jarach's review of *Moving Forward: Program for a Participatory Economy* somewhat strained. Jarach states that he has finally read one of Michael Albert's books. It is clear that he didn't read very carefully.

Mr. Jarach strains to deny that parecon is anti-capitalist. Yet *Moving Forward* unambiguously rejects the institutions of private property and production for profit. There is a discussion which rejects rewarding ownership of property (pages 16-18). On page 33 is the following statement: "In a parecon of course, none of this exists. There is no owner of a firm. No one seeks profits." Market systems are clearly rejected (pages 85-86). The disappearance of private property and production for profit is advocated (page 152); the transfer of assets from owners to workers is envisioned (page 157). Other passages could be found that indicate that participatory economics includes a rejection of private ownership. A look at the introduction to Albert and Hahnel's "The Political Economy of Participatory Economics" would confirm that they base their model on the public ownership of the means of production. Parecon could best be described as a form of libertarian socialism, akin to G.D.H. Cole's version of guild socialism or Cornelius Castoriadis' self managed society.

The discussion of balanced work complexes by Mr. Jarach is completely out of context. Specifically the issue relates to divisions between intellectual versus manual labor and is aimed at curbing the domination of "head workers" over "hand workers." A balanced work complex contains elements of both. Onerous tasks are those which require greater

sacrifice and effort by those who perform them. Parecon is the only economic model I am aware of that attempts to overcome the division into directors and executives in such a radical fashion. I fail to see why this would not be of interest to anarchists.

In asserting that parecon is capitalist Mr. Jarach strains his argument beyond credulity. A look around at the kind of institutions capitalism prefers should convince anyone that participatory economics is not and never will be on the capitalist agenda. Not even as a "reform" to buy off a successful revolutionary movement.

We may distinguish between Albert's views on the state, which are frankly not as well thought out, from his economic proposals. An anarchist may reject the former while supporting the latter. This is especially so since parecon is designed to manage a publicly owned system without intervention or control by the state. From an economic perspective at least the state becomes superfluous. On this basis we could simply abolish government.

Of course this is not to suggest that Albert is beyond criticism in other areas. The pathway to parecon he presents relies on essentially reformist moves which I think are now largely ruled out by the global capitalist economy, which is bent on taking back previous reforms. He overlooks the fact that such reforms are usually offered in attempts to defuse more revolutionary alternatives. Furthermore his comments on the idea of a guaranteed income are ambiguous. While he suggests that a "negative income tax" could help establish parecon he seems unclear about whether a guaranteed income should remain after its establishment. I would argue that it must be a part of any such proposed economic alternative as a recognition that we exist as more than functional parts of an economic system. His model however deserves better treatment than it received in the review.

As for his comments about the division of labor and the

abolition of money and the wages system, it appears that Lawrence Jarach prefers the anarcho-communist position. Unlike Michael Albert I do think that anarchist-communism is not only desirable but ultimately possible. Nonetheless I can more easily conceive of a parecon transforming itself into a moneyless, zerowork society than I can of jumping straight from capitalism into anarchist communism. Kropotkin notwithstanding one of the weaknesses of the anarcho-communist viewpoint has always been a vagueness as to how such a society would actually function economically. The example of primitive hunter-gatherer societies is inspiring and certainly indicates potentials for the future. This does not however give us concrete ideas about how to transform our present society or organize a new one. In order for anarcho-communists to do more than preach to the converted such an economic vision must be articulated. Until that happens I will continue to support Albert's views on parecon, if not his views on the state.

In Solidarity,
R. Burke
St. Louis, MO

Lawrence responds: Parecon isn't anti-capitalist...

Burke has seemingly allowed his admiration for the (he admits) reformist economic program of Albert & Co. to cloud his understanding of what I tried to explain as my understanding of the characteristics and defining aspects of capitalism. Albert seems to retain some bizarre idea that competing "buyers and sellers" have to be individuals, precluding the possibility of corporations (in the classic fascist sense and/or the modern American sense) or states acting as such. Burke recognizes that Albert is missing the corporate nature of the beast these days ("the global capitalist economy"). I consider this a huge failing in Albert's worldview, undercutting whatever insights he might have about (anti-) capitalist economics.

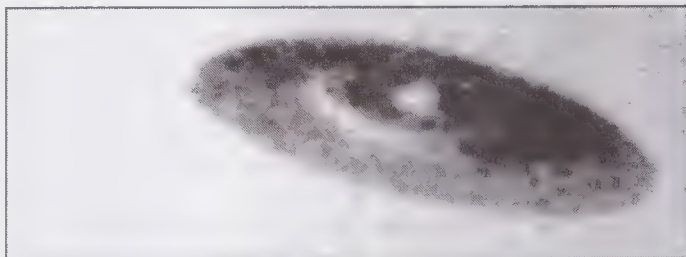
The issue of "Balanced Job Complexes" is tricky. If Burke is

correct that this section of the book is only about abolishing the differences between "head workers" and "hand workers" then Albert spent too many pages on the topic. "A balanced job complex is a collection of tasks within a workplace comparable in its burdens and benefits, and in its impact on the worker's ability to participate in decision-making, to all other job complexes in that workplace and across the economy" (p.72). "All this probably sounds vague" (p.82). No shit. It may have been clearer to Burke, but it wasn't to me. Perhaps that has something to do with a different understanding of the nature of capitalism. I will say it again: capitalism can survive the implementation of Albert's balancing act.

My assertion is that three of the four pillars of parecon are not incompatible with the continuation of capitalism as I (and plenty of other radicals) understand it, not that "parecon is capitalist." What I said was that "[c]apitalists could, with difficulty" adapt to the official abolition of private property (like what happened under Real Existing Socialism), the restructuring of the criteria for remuneration (like the cult of stakhanovism), and the current strict division of labor-not just between manual and intellectual workers. Certainly capitalists prefer things as they were in the last century, but if their entire existence is at stake, they will adapt, remain patient, and wait for the time when they can roll back whatever gains the workers have wrested from them. I stick by my opinion that parecon isn't anti-capitalist-at least not sufficiently challenging to capitalism for me to take it seriously.

Burke can more easily imagine that a parecon system could be transformed into one based on an anarcho-communist vision than a more (presumably cataclysmic) change from the current structure of global capitalism. I can't. This is the classic tension between reformism and revolution, one that Albert talks about using the clever formulation "non-reformist reforms" (demands for tinkering with The System that The System can't deal with and remain The System, demands that challenge its very foundations). Not being an Albertian dialectician, I admit that I am lost

here. Regardless, one of the many problems with any kind of reformism is that many people who struggle for reforms have a tendency to become satisfied with their so-called victories, thinking that the struggle is now over (or



Identifiable Flying Hubcap

that at the very least they can take a well-deserved vacation). Such halfway struggles are not ones that I am willing to fight for.

For Burke, Albert's economic vision is worth supporting until something better comes along. That's how it is in the capitalist marketplace of ideas.

More anarcho-UFO-ology

hi gang...

ufologist j. allen hynek once commented that altho eric von daniken's methods are unscholarly, he has touched a sensitive nerve in the collective unconscious. that is a great summation of von daniken. and now that nerve has been activated in the anarchist milieu.

i would like to offer my services as a reference source. i became interested in flying saucers before they were commodified into space aliens. riding the energy of an emerging archetype was thrilling. my synchronicity in relation to the subject was outrageous. i also was a member of the universal party, a political party based contact with extra-terrestrials. i met heaven's gate twenty years before they did the body drop. back in 1975, leaving your body behind was considered failure. no leaders, teachers, books, techniques. it was an all-consuming surrender to the next level of human evolution. the roughest and most direct way of transformation i've encountered.

i can offer information only. my knowledge of anarchism is close to zero. and i am fine with that. i find the letter pages of

anarchist magazines to be challenging and occasionally enlightening. (and if you people are going to examine UFOs, i want to hear it). i also get wonderful history lessons and world news unavailable elsewhere. and

there is vague kinship. i was delighted to read in *FE* that altho they knew there was no difference between father bush and clinton, some anarchists' dislike for bush moved them to vote for clinton. i registered republican in '92, so i could vote buchanan over bush in the primary. my anger at the bush family is so intense it amuses me.

my current belief is best expressed in a 1971 statement by british astrophysicist frederick hoyle. humans are being used in games being played by alien minds. they are not from another planet, they are from another universe. they have been here since the beginning and they control everything. hoyle's statement is not speculation, but a declaration by someone with access to more information than most of us have. (of course, he could be a wacko). i call one of the earth games "warworld." 600 years ago, a pleiadian teenager thought that he was going to take france. a venusian kid laid down a vision chip and we got joan of arc.

to continue with this theory would do nothing more than piss some of you off (sensitive nerve). hopefully amuse a few others. and how much can a gamepiece really know about the game? theorizing proves nothing, it merely demonstrates the creativity of the theorist. and a selective view of history. alexander reported that a flying shield blew a hole in the walls of tyre, allowing his troops to take the city. military historians ignore the story. UFO believers

wax enthusiastically.

hoyle's exact quote appears in jim marris' *alien agenda*. it is a fairly good one-volume introduction and libraries carry it. montezuma might have strengthened his *FE* article by drawing on archeologist zecharia sitchin's *the 12th planet*. john keel opened the can of worms with *operation trojan horse* (paperback *why UFOs?*). keel shifted the analysis by drawing on religion and folklore. and he considers the phenomenon to be extra-dimensional (hoyle) rather than extra-terrestrial. do an author search, there are variations in the title. *communion* author whitley strieber does not believe his experiences to be extra-terrestrial. in his forward to kenneth ring's *the omega project*, strieber states: "i suspect that the disruption is indeed external, but the form it takes is hallucinatory and culturally mediated." ring speculates that the UFO abduction and the near-death experience are modern forms of shamanic initiation. in the last chapter, ring considers UFOs as "agents of cultural deconstruction."

one last thing. monotheism, like UFOs may not be an appropriate subject for this magazine. but i think it is more dangerous than capitalism. it does more than create separation (zappa lyric: "my god told me there are no others"). many people on this planet worship a deity, yahweh/allah, who is appeased by bloodshed. i suggest that this puts a major tweak in our collective psyche.

that's it, my dears. if anyone wants to play UFO (ultimately finding oneness?), it would be my pleasure. and it doesn't have to be in this magazine. years ago i downgraded my obsession to a mild interest. maybe someone will re-enthuse me. and i want to thank all you activists for the work that you do in our efforts to stop the greedheads. tho at most i suspect that we can only slow them down. i doubt anything can truly stop them except for natural disasters or microbes. or somebody in alpha centauri rolling a "7".

the best,
fred smalley
godspawn33@yahoo.com

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Bob Black's most recent—and possibly most entertaining—book. An intelligent, witty & compelling demolition job on both Murray Bookchin's atrocious *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism* and his overall philosophical and radical pretensions. Highly recommended. (C.A.L. Press, 1997) 176pp. **\$7.95** paper.

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John Zerzan's latest book, collecting critical essays from *Anarchy & Demolition Derby*, including "Future Primitive," "The Mass Psychology of Misery," "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism" and "Tonality and the Totality," along with his "Nihilist's Dictionary." (C.A.L. Press & Autonomedia, 1994) 185pp. **\$6.95** paper.

Withered Anarchism

Upcoming collection (due out later this Winter) on the withered anarchism of Murray Bookchin, featuring critical essays by Bob Black, Lawrence Jarach, Michael William and others. (C.A.L. Press, 2003) **\$11.95** paper. **Special Pre-Publication Offer:** Order the book before March 31, 2003 and get it as soon as it comes off the press for only \$10.00 postpaid! (Orders must be prepaid by March 31.)

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Raoul Vaneigem's still-explosive masterpiece on radical subjectivity in a world of things and their prices. This book has been serialized in past issues of *Anarchy*, but it's well worth reading & re-reading. One of the two major works of the Situationist International, this text played a role in the gestation of the general strike of May, 1968 in France. (Left Bank & Rebel Press, 1967, 1994) 279pp. **\$15.95** paper.

Against His-Story, Against Leviathan

Fredy Perlman's most important work presents his account of the world history of civilizations from their origins as they devoured primitive peoples and other civilizations on their way to the dead-end we know too well as the present day. A poetic and deeply subversive reversal of perspective on history. (Black & Red, 1983) 302pp. **\$9.95** paper.

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Marie Louise Berneri's thorough and perceptive study of the most important utopian writings since Plato's *Republic*. (Freedom Press, 1950) 339pp. **\$9.95** paper.

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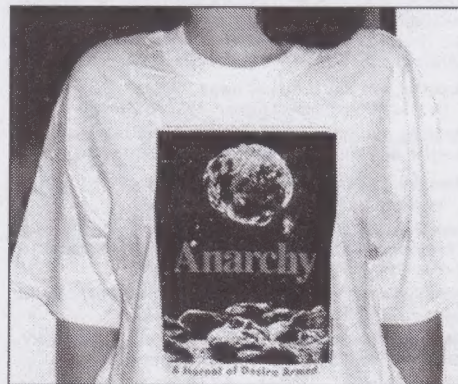
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Anarchy #24 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [March-April '90] Includes "Misinformation and Manipulation: An Anarchist Critique of the Politics of AIDS" by Joe Peacock, and a discussion of "Anarchy & the Sacred" by D. Campion, F. Faun & Chernyl.

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Anarchy #36 (84pp., magazine) [Spring '93] Includes Michael Williams' "Bisexuality" and part 2 of Manolo Gonzalez's "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona."

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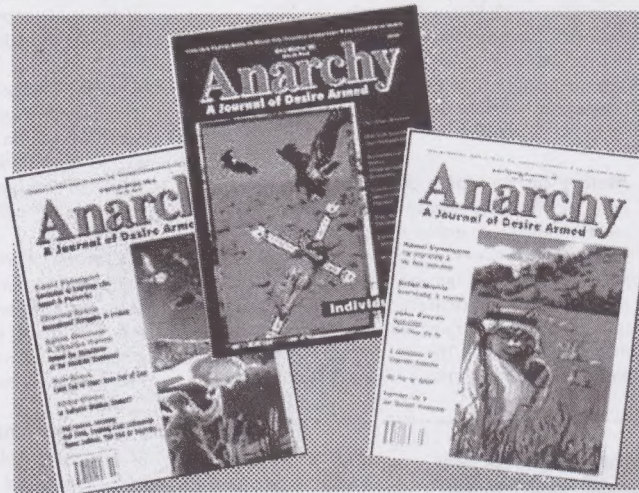
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